



Green Shoots
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



ANNUAL REPORT

2019/20





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HEAD OF SCHOOL'S WELCOME



Welcome to the GSIS Annual Report for the momentous year of 2019/20

When these words are published there is no way of knowing what further changes the school and community will have experienced. We really are living through exceptional times that challenge us all to reflect on what is important in so many facets of our lives, and those of our children.

In the following pages we will provide you a summary; in tables, text and photos, of the school year that will live long in everyone's memory. At the beginning of the year in August 2019, Green Shoots was at its largest enrolment. Although our secondary programme was smaller in terms of year groups (as we didn't run an IGCSE programme this year), it was larger in terms of student numbers than ever before. In the Primary School we invested time and resources into delivery of the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), developing what had been a system in trial for a number of years, into our main delivery system for the learning goals of the UK National Curriculum. And our Early Years, whilst still attracting a core of ardent admirers, was our focus of development as we embarked upon the new year with ambitious plans for regeneration and growth.

The Autumn terms flew by and finished in a memorable final Friday Christmas performance at the Anantara Resort. All students performed on stage and we marvelled at the assembled groups, performing ensemble pieces to the delight of their parents. As we returned for a short spring term of just 13 days of school, attention turned to mid-year reports, three-way conferences and the selection of a new Head of School. These were heady, action packed days of interaction between community members and the school, forward looking to the challenges that lay ahead.

And as we celebrated the transition to the New Lunar Year of the Rat, the world changed overnight and has not yet regained its equilibrium.

The story told on these pages are edited highlights of our year that will only touch upon the dramas that unfolded from February 3rd, 2020. The emails and meetings, the new skills we acquired and the trials we overcame. Our resistance and resentments to the changes we hadn't asked for or wished to have visited upon our children. Newness and novelty for the children rapidly gave way to frustrations and isolations for all community members who had all manner of their work, family life and security disrupted.

And yet we endured and changed and came back to school for a two-month sprint to the end of the year in May and June. And at the end, memories faded and it seemed like things could go back to a more modest version of normal (that was of course until August 2020...).

So we publish our record to stand as testament to the durability of our community and the period of time we went through together. I sincerely hope the narrative tells an accurate and compelling story in the progress and development of our very unique school.

Best regards,

Dave Porter (BSc Hons Psy, MBA Ed Mgmt)



DIRECTOR'S WELCOME



As Dave has said, what a 'momentous year!' When we entered 2019/20 none of us could have anticipated what was to come. Looking back, I am filled with pride, gratitude, and amazement at the way everybody came together despite their own struggles and fears, to keep our community together through the tumult of our shared journey.

The year started for me in a strange land: one I'm supposed to call home but haven't lived in since 1996. My return to England has been followed now by Dave, whose retirement has also brought him to the UK after more than three decades overseas. Meanwhile, COVID-19's impact on tourism in Vietnam, particularly in our region, is making others in the Green Shoots family 'go home' too, many before they had hoped to do so. We are all having to look at life through a new lens and from a different angle, and so with this report I would like to acknowledge the Green Shoots families whose lives have been changed by the global pandemic. Those of you who know me will know that I am an eternal optimist, and as such I am confident that all of the lives uprooted this year will find their equilibrium again soon enough. Until then, I thank each and every one of you for the part you have played in holding Green Shoots together.

Although COVID had a massive impact on our school this past year, it is important to remember that it closed our gates for only three months of the year, with regular operations before and after that tumultuous period. In these pages, you will read about the impact of COVID on our community, but also the unchanged: the events, lessons, friendships, activities that carried on as normal. This 'normal' was in large part the result of work done by Dave during his three years with us. His stable, reassuring leadership allowed us to create routines and systems that could be relied upon regardless of what else was happening. His standards and

expectation that excellence was key to everything we do ensured that we were well prepared for the shocks that came (and, where preparation was not possible, we were guided through these challenging times). My unwavering thanks also to our team of teachers and support staff, whose cohesiveness and hard work kept Green Shoots together as demands changed daily, and to our parents and students, who showed phenomenal adaptability and resilience throughout.

As the African proverb goes, 'smooth seas never made a skilled sailor.' This year the seas were rough, and they have yet to return to the calm we hope is not far off, but by weathering the storm we have become stronger, more agile, more responsive, and more skilled.

We closed the year on a high note: School and parent organised events brought us back together as a community and we registered our highest ever enrolment numbers for 2020/21 as a number of students committed to joining Green Shoots from neighbouring schools, other parts of Vietnam, and overseas. As Green Shoots enters its second decade later this year we look forward to putting all of this new *Learning for Life* to good use.

My thanks to you all,

Catherine McKinley (BA Hons Chinese, PG Dip. Media & Governance, MSc Public Policy & Mgmt)



CHANGING THE GUARD



This year was **Dave's last as our Head of School** and a transitional year to our new Head, Rick Elya, who became increasingly proactive in decision making from the summer term and played a critical role in preparing for the upcoming school year over the July-August break.

When seeking a replacement for Dave - our first professional Head of School, who took over day-to-day leadership of Green Shoots from Sue and Catherine in 2017 - we drew up a job description and profile of our ideal candidate, which was then approved by our Advisory Board before being shared with the Council of International Schools, Council of British International Schools, the Association of International School Heads, and a number of personal and professional networks targeting suitable candidates. We received over **40 applications from highly qualified school leaders around the world**. From this pool, we developed a cohort of around 15 candidates who we felt were most suitable for the role.

We compared each candidate in terms of their experience, qualifications, leadership style, educational philosophy, and a number of other important attributes. Five candidates were then invited for interviews, which were held with Catherine, Dave, Sue and our Advisory Board members. Of these five, three were offered a second interview which focused on specific scenarios we expected to face during his or her tenure and asked how the candidate would respond to each. Finally, two candidates were invited to visit Green Shoots and meet members of our community: staff, students and parents. These visits took place in January 2020, just before our Tet break.

Both candidates would have provided Green Shoots with excellent leadership and it was difficult to choose one over the other. In the end, after

significant consultation, we opted to **offer the job to Rick**, whose values we felt were most closely aligned with ours and whose substantial experience as a Primary and Early Years leader meant he has significant insight into the needs of our younger learners, who comprise around two thirds of our student body. Like Dave before him, he also has experience building a strong primary programme in a small school into a high-quality middle and high school programme as a school grows.

After accepting our offer, Rick became increasingly involved in Green Shoots' leadership. As our Crisis Schooling began he was copied in on critical communications so that he would have historical insight into school operations once the new year started under his leadership. He and Dave conducted regular phone calls as part of a prolonged handover period, which picked up in intensity from June through to Dave's departure from Vietnam in mid August.

We are confident that the **process used to employ our new school leader was comprehensive, transparent, and fair**. It has found for Green Shoots a new Head who is as committed and experienced as Dave, and who will now take on the mantle of leading us through this critical period and into our next stage of growth. Rick will remain with us for three years, with an option to extend for a further two years after that. His **values and priorities are fully aligned** with ours and we very much look forward to growing under his guidance.



GUIDING STATEMENTS

This has been an extremely challenging year for a **values-led school** like our own, and it has forced upon us some self-reflection as we have attempted to balance the varied needs of different groups and priorities within our community (students, parents, teachers, administration, financial...). But it has also provided us with the perfect opportunity to really live by our values and to extend them into areas of our lives that we don't usually focus on.

Green Shoots' core value of **Respect** is fed by seven others: Adaptability, Tenacity, Independence, Sustainability, Thoughtfulness, Integrity and Cooperation. We chose these values because we believe they give us the tools we need to live full, fulfilling, and compassionate lives.

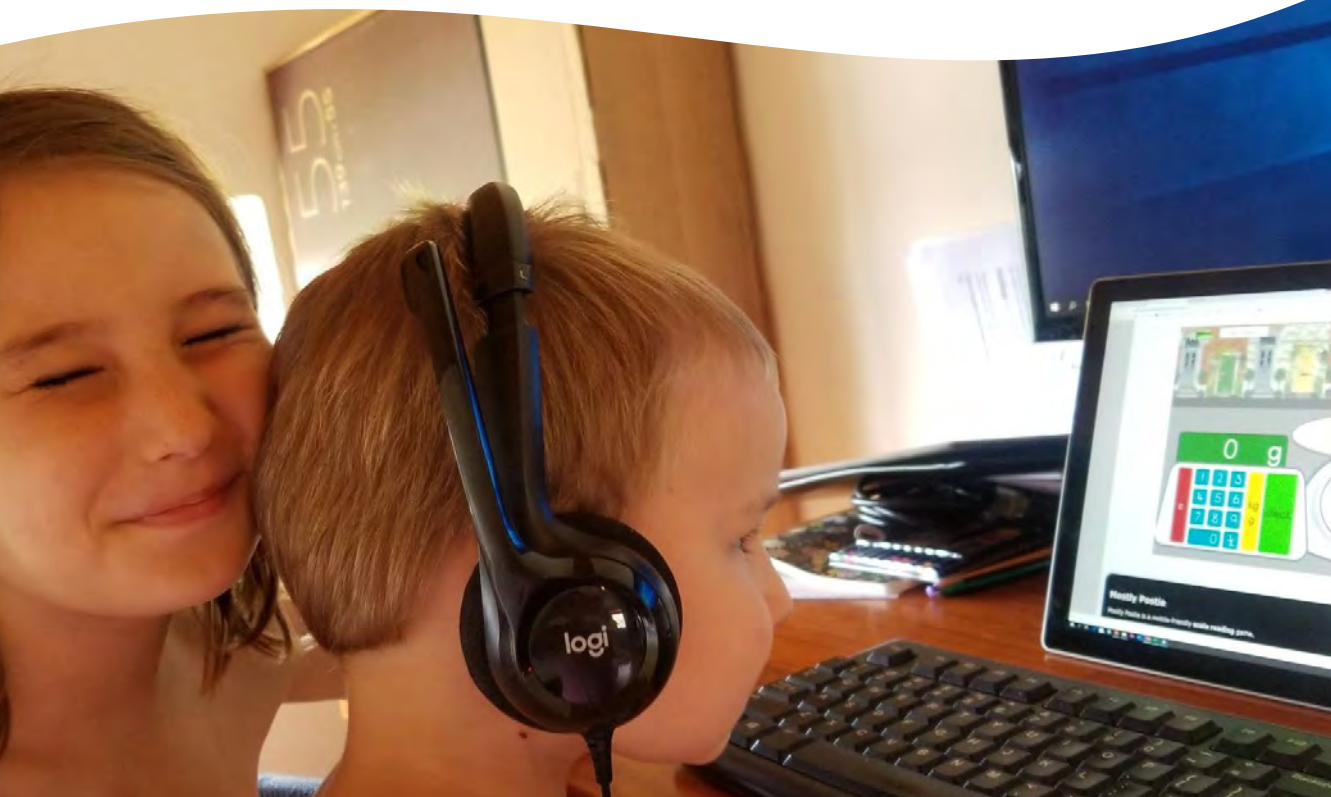
Our year began as usual, with sustained focus on each value for a period of several weeks. Weekly assemblies, discussions, and classroom activities combined to help students understand the importance of the value being discussed and how to integrate it into his or her life.

Then came COVID-19, and all of a sudden the application of our values system to a new and unknown scenario took on an equally new significance. **Students, staff and parents** found themselves **adapting** to Crisis Schooling, a form of online learning that was pulled together in days and sustained, week by week with no clear end in sight, ultimately for three months. The **tenacity** (persistence) that was required of everybody was phenomenal as we moved from one day to the next with no knowledge of what was to come. Students from two to 15 years old found themselves newly **independent** in their learning as they started to learn from home, away from the face-to-face influence of teachers and peers. **Thoughtfulness** and **cooperation** were critical to those in families where screens, resources, and parental time had

to be shared between siblings, and children had to learn that parents had commitments too and couldn't always be available to help or care for them.

For **Green Shoots leadership**, the toughest values to balance were **sustainability** and **integrity**. So many people with so many often conflicting needs, desires and pressures: how could we meet everybody's needs in such complex times? We found ourselves trying to provide help to families in need, as COVID restrictions hit their businesses and reduced their incomes, while also ensuring that the school remained sustainable over the long term. While we could never have 'pleased' everyone, we hope we came close to finding the balance between short-term support and long-term sustainable operation. Our efforts to do so were guided always by a focus on honesty, equity, and transparency.







GOVERNANCE & STANDARDS



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

At any time, but particularly in times of stress and complexity, it is important for a school to be able to evidence continuity, good governance, and high standards of care. At Green Shoots we do this in several ways.

Our **leadership** is broken into three distinct and clearly delineated roles; a separation that allows each position holder to focus on a single area of expertise. The three areas are:

- **Director:** Strategic issues (corporate governance and long-term planning),
- **Head of School:** Overall school and academic leadership, and
- **Director of Administration:** Finance, operations, and human resource oversight

As per its charter, our **Advisory Board** met twice during the school year, once in December and once in June. During these meetings, school leadership and advisors focused on: areas for programme development, improvement and consolidation; facilities enhancement and rental stability; financial planning and projection; response to COVID and; long-term school development.

The 2019/20 school year was the last in our three-year **strategic planning** period from 2017 to 2020 and gave us an opportunity to assess progress during the period and begin planning for the next three years. Green Shoots uses three-year strategic plans to ensure that our **development is structured and focused** on the areas that need it most. Our first plan, which ran from 2014 to 2017, focused heavily on resourcing the school and strengthening our faculty: improving the classroom experience for our students who were, and remain, our top priority. This second plan moved beyond the classroom as

we felt we had achieved a high level of service and were ready to consolidate other areas of school growth. We increased our focus on leadership, good governance, transparency, and membership of the Council of International Schools (CIS), which would guide us toward ever-higher standards across the full range of services we offer. We are pleased to announce that **we have achieved the majority of goals laid out in our 2017-20 Strategic Plan**. During the three-year period, we:

- Employed our first professional Head of School
- Increased and improved mid-level leadership
- Conducted a school-wide community survey that identified both areas of success and areas for future growth and paved the way for membership of CIS
- Increased information transparency
- Expanded our core, language, the arts, and sports programmes, resources and staffing
- Upgraded our facilities to meet the needs of a growing community
- Improved our business and administrative systems and protocols to support sustainable school growth



Due to our shift to crisis schooling in the second half of this school year, as well as the financial implications of COVID-19, **a small number of annual goals were not met in full**. Those that remain important will become **priority items in our upcoming strategy**, which will be developed through consultation over the remaining months of 2020 and shared months of 2020 and shared with our community early in 2021. Areas carried over from the current strategy include:

- Expand and consolidate our Special Education Needs (SEN) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) programmes
- Build links with other like-minded schools around the world

Corporate **financial sustainability** is a core aspect of good governance and was highlighted as an issue of focus during the 2019/20 year. As a small school, Green Shoots does not have the **financial resources** to protect its community from significant shocks such as those felt this year, and we must share the impact of these shocks with our staff and parents. This school year tested us all but despite the pressures and difficulties, we are proud of - and grateful to - all Green Shoots community members who worked together to ensure that we weathered the financial storm. We are aware that future storms are possible (in fact, likely) and are working with all stakeholders to ensure the financial stability of our school.

To protect against the kind of wholesale shock that could threaten Green Shoots viability (IE: litigation,

theft, or property damage) we hold a series of **insurance policies** that are now under review to ensure they continue to protect students' long-term education.

This year we launched a comprehensive **risk analysis** process designed to identify, classify, and rank possible risks so that they can be mitigated where possible and planned for where mitigation is not possible. Green Shoots has always used its strategic planning process to identify and address known risks. But this year, following the impact of COVID-19, we increased the resources dedicated to the exercise. Under the guidance of an external risk assessor we are undertaking a thorough risk review independent of (but aligned with) our strategic planning process. This is due for completion in 2020/21.

CONSULTATION & TRANSPARENCY

Community consultation is critical to good governance and has always been part of Green Shoots' decision-making process. However, the campus closure experienced this year and the subsequent absence of regular face-to-face communication made us aware that more formal systems of consultation are required to replace the informal ones that served us well in the past (given the small and tight-knit nature of our community). In response, our senior leadership team increased the time given to **individual and group meetings for parents** (online, and in person when this was possible) to address concerns about Crisis





Schooling, financing, and other issues as they arose. We also revisited our **Parent Group** charter, enhancing its communication and consultative role with the introduction of language representatives and confirmation of class and section representatives from August 2020. We introduced a **Staff Representative** role through which Green Shoots faculty can formally share views, concerns and ideas with leadership, enhancing the ad hoc system used in the past.

During our campus closure, we undertook a series of **surveys** to gauge community opinion on issues such as online timetabling, holiday dates, and ways to reclaim lost teaching time, which fed directly into Crisis Schooling policy making. Immediately after the closure period, we initiated an externally moderated **'Lessons Learned' exercise** that brought together representatives from Green Shoots' leadership, faculty, and parents. The resulting report offered recommendations for change if further school closure is required and its findings led to changes in some of our communication and feedback systems. They also informed our 2020/21 **contingency Online Programme planning**, developed over the summer to ensure that Green Shoots was fully prepared for further lockdowns and subsequent online learning.

Once decisions are made, they must be **communicated**. We do this in a number of ways: our **website and social media accounts** provide information about Green Shoots to the public while **email, Sycamore, teacher communication platforms (like Seesaw and Google classroom), and weekly Head of School Notes** keep parents up to date with issues relating to their child's learning.

Group and one-on-one formal and informal parent-teacher meetings give families regular updates on their child's progress.

During COVID, we introduced **new communication systems** to meet the exceptional needs of the time. Regular online meetings were held between parents and school leadership and faculty, and a series of Director's videos was developed to give insight into key decision-making as it impacted our families. We also used our school blog to discuss topics aimed at helping families cope with lockdown and online learning, and published detailed reports covering issues such as how to support your child with online learning, and a timeline detailing how our school responded to each change in government policy.

Our **annual report**, of which this is the second in our series, offers a transparent view of the year past, while our strategic planning process, gives families and staff both the opportunity to contribute ideas to our growth and have access to plans once they are final.



EXTERNAL MONITORING

External monitoring is an important part of good governance because it holds a school accountable to standards set by an organisation that is outside of its own leadership and measures each school's performance compared to other schools around the world. This monitoring can be offered by curriculum providers, such as Cambridge, and by global education groups that monitor a much wider range of standards in addition to those linked to a school's curriculum. There are currently around 12,000 international schools globally, most of which are not held to externally moderated standards, but Green Shoots takes these standards extremely seriously and has gained membership of two global councils that give our families reassurance about not only the quality of our programme but also our hiring practices, facilities, child safeguarding, and other critical elements of education.

In June 2019, Green Shoots gained membership of the **Council of International Schools (CIS)**, making us one of the smallest CIS schools in the world (we are the 10th smallest of more than 750 globally, and the only CIS school in Central Vietnam). Green Shoots' entry into the CIS group of schools, despite our small size and limited resources, reflects our unwavering focus on excellence in teaching and learning, child safety, recruitment, governance, facilities, and other areas. The 2019/21 school year

was our first full year as a CIS school and allowed us to solidify our progress to date as well as begin planning for further improvements.

This year, we were due to renew our membership of the **Council of British International Schools (COBIS)** and work had begun on preparing our dossier when COVID closed both our campus and international borders. School leadership focus was redirected from long-term issues to more immediate ones, and the inspector assigned to visit Green Shoots was unable to reach Vietnam, so our renewal visit has been indefinitely postponed. Nonetheless, COBIS has agreed to extend our membership until the COVID emergency has passed and a renewal inspection is possible. We will continue to prepare for this and in the meantime will continue to benefit from access to resources and expertise provided by COBIS to its member schools.

Regarding our curriculum, Green Shoots has been a member of **Cambridge International Assessment Education** (formerly Cambridge International Exams) and a registered Cambridge Exam Centre since 2016. Our secondary school runs a Cambridge programme that is externally moderated and assessed by the international curriculum provider.



Cambridge International School





THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

LIFE ON CAMPUS

Despite the disruption caused by campus closure this year, it was important to retain continuity of learning and a regular routine. To this end, we endeavoured to operate normally wherever we could and to adapt our 'normal year' to the online environment where we couldn't.

Campus upgrades were limited as we had undertaken a significant facilities upgrade in the summer prior to the 2018/19 school year. However, an astute observer would notice the addition of a new school garden and chicken coop in August and the creation of a much-loved climbing wall in the Bamboo Garden over the Christmas break. Our new Admin building gave us an upgraded 'Feel Better Bay' and a new Head of School office, as well as a staff preparation area.

Most of our **annual celebrations** were marked this year, either on campus or online, including (but not only): Mid-Autumn Festival, Halloween, Christmas, Tet, Easter, Francophone Week, Anti-Bullying Week,

Taste Week, and Book Week. As COVID changed education around the world, we also celebrated new but important international days that helped our students engage with their online/at home peers in different countries.

This year saw the creation and launch of the **Green Shoots House System**, through which each student and faculty member became part of one of three school houses: Terra, Aria, and Acqua. Long a tradition in many educational systems, 'houses' help children develop team building skills while also learning to compete fairly against others. They provide opportunities to build relationships across the school, giving mixed-age groups a stronger sense of support, community and identity. Older students take on leadership opportunities as house captains, and house points are earned through collaborative or problem-solving activities; sporting events; and modelling our values. The house system was launched in May and celebrated with an end-of-year Fun Sports Day. Our inaugural Bamboo Cup was won by Aria for best performance over a two-day competition.





In the **Early Years**, which serves children from two to four years old, we operated three classes: two led by expatriate teachers and our bilingual playgroup led by experienced Vietnamese teaching staff. During our online Crisis Schooling (see next page), Early Years staff developed innovative themed boxes that contained carefully prepared sensory, art and fine motor activities and were accompanied by online 'Creative Classrooms' in which teachers joined together and demonstrated the activities. Each teacher also provided online learning for their own classes which included songs, games, stories and show and tell.

In our **Primary school**, we operated four classes for children aged from five to ten years old. Of these, two were unique year groups (Year 1 and Year 2), and two were combined classes (Year 3/4 and Year 5/6). The year gave increasing focus to the use of the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), which Green Shoots is expanding throughout our primary and early years programmes, although progress on IPC development was slowed by the need for online Crisis Schooling mid-way through the year. Students learned about agriculture in our new community garden and about global cultures, music, architecture, postal systems, and other things that make us different while bringing us together, through IPC units.

Our **Secondary School** saw a number of changes this year. We started the year with the unexpected **loss of our Head of Secondary**, who was forced to remain in the US following her summer break during which she learned that her child required medical care that was not available in central Vietnam. We

distributed her teaching and leadership duties between remaining secondary staff, who picked up the new challenge with only days to prepare and with the resilience and adaptability for which Green Shoots staff are known.

While the section's overall student numbers increased, our secondary students were concentrated in the three **Cambridge Secondary One (CS1)** years (from Year 7 to Year 9), indicating a steady increase in the number of students graduating from primary to secondary at Green Shoots.

We did not run an **IGCSE programme** for older secondary students this year due to lack of demand from families in the area, but see the increase in lower secondary numbers as a positive indicator of future growth. The break in IGCSE teaching gave secondary staff the opportunity to revamp our programme, which has now been expanded to create the Green Shoots **Global Citizenship Certificate**. This new programme, for launch in August 2020, adds personal skills and values development to the academic programme for our oldest learners and prepares them for the **International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme**.

New courses, both in-house (noted on page 22) and through consolidation of the Cambridge Global Perspectives course in CS1, expanded our academic programme. The 2019/20 school year was the first in which all secondary students had use of their own **computing device** (previously, only IGCSE students did this). The transition proved well timed, as students were well prepared for the technological demands of online learning when it came.

ONLINE SCHOOLING

The year was dominated by the impact of COVID-19, which closed our campus to students from early February, immediately following the school's *Tet* break, until early May (although strict monitoring of, and adherence to, government regulations meant we were open to staff throughout).

With Vietnam closing its borders and schools only slightly after China and well before the rest of the world, we had almost no reference points or guides when we launched our **Crisis Schooling programme** with a combination of online lessons and physical resource packs sent home to children using our network of school buses. Of the three-month closure, almost half was announced by provincial authorities on a weekly or biweekly basis, making medium-term planning impossible. Nonetheless, our initial week-by-week response to closure morphed into a more formalised Crisis Schooling programme that continued until we were allowed to reopen to students in early May.

The impact of Crisis Schooling was felt unevenly, with families with younger children, those with full-time working parents, and those whose mother tongue

is not English, finding it hardest to transition online. Once we received permission to return to classroom teaching in the first week of May, and to address the **discrepancies in learning during our closure**, a detailed assessment programme was put in place and **one-to-one tuition** was provided to students in need (see page 31). In place of our regular summer school, we ran a heavily subsidised **summer camp** that was attended by around 80 children who benefited from the opportunity to 'make up for lost time' in areas such as social skills development and English-language conversation, both of which were very difficult to provide in the online setting.

To **gather feedback about our performance**, a series of Forum for the Future meetings were held between parents, teachers and school leadership through which we received direct feedback, and the externally moderated Lessons Learned exercise noted on page 13 identified areas where we had performed well and those in which there was room for improvement. This planning exercise proved invaluable as the 2020/21 year was successfully later launched online following the reemergence of COVID in Da Nang just days before the beginning of our new school year.







INTERNATIONALISM



One of our commitments upon joining CIS was a re-evaluation of our **school's definition of 'Internationalism'** and subsequent development of plans to ensure the concept is rooted deeply in everything we do. This will help us ensure that our school is, and remains, truly international in outlook and that our programmes are developed with a global mindset. Prior to our shutdown this process began with a brainstorming session for staff during an early Professional Development day. The process yielded a number of ideas and follow-up sessions with students and parents were planned. These were later put on hold as priorities shifted to COVID response and Crisis Schooling, but we are committed to relaunching them as soon as circumstances allow.

A number of **other initiatives** went ahead, including a **'Cultural Awareness' course** for newcomers to Hoi An run by one of our parents and designed to raise mutual understanding between expatriates in Vietnam and their host country nationals.

Students took part in a series of activities that raised their **awareness of different cultures and ways of life**. As always, we marked key international and Vietnamese days of celebration, such as the Mid-Autumn Festival, Lunar New Year, Christmas and Easter. This year, both through the curriculum and thanks to parents who offered to organise events in the classroom, children were exposed to customs and traditions from around the world such as *Diwali* (the Indian Festival of Lights) and New Zealand's Maori *Poi* and *Haka*. Our Reception class spent a term looking at cultures from around the world, while primary classes used the IPC to focus on issues related to internationalism and global differences and similarities.

We focused on different foods through *'le Semaine du Gout'* (Taste Week) and on French culture throughout *Francophonie* Week. A Cultural Diversity

Day in May celebrating both our differences and the things we all have in common and in June, rounding out the year once we had returned to on-campus learning, units of study in the primary school focused on how to address prejudice.

Our **United World College Gap Year programme** started strong, with three UWC graduates from Lebanon and Germany joining us on campus. However, their stay was cut short by visa and travel restrictions ahead of and during COVID. We closed out the year with a young Green Shoots alumnus taking on the role played earlier in the year by our UWC 'gappies'. As always, we are immensely grateful to these volunteers for their work, energy, and ideas.

Prior to Vietnam's border closure, we had developed a plan through which our new Gap volunteers would be grouped into regional and/or cultural pairs while at Green Shoots. In this way, we planned to capitalise on their individual histories and cultural expertise to bring greater global awareness to our students through dance, music, language learning, art, and other areas of interest. We look forward to putting this plan into action as soon as we are able to welcome overseas volunteers back to Green Shoots.





SUSTAINABILITY

On campus, we undertook a number of new initiatives this year as part of our ongoing effort to keep sustainability at the forefront of what we do. We created a new **community garden** where students learned about caring for the land and growing vegetables. The first project was land clearance as the area had not been cultivated for many years. Once the land was ready, students grew lemongrass, eggplant, beans, tomatoes and watercress. The garden was maintained by staff during our campus closure and was thriving when students were allowed to return to school in May. Compost bins were developed, and maintained throughout the closure period, using food scraps and water from the school kitchen. The compost was used to fertilise the young vegetables.

In the classroom, we introduced a new secondary course, **CELS (Community, Environment, Life Skills, and Sustainability)**, which teaches children about their local environment through practical and theoretical lenses. It adds to our already existing IDEaS (Innovation, Design, Engineering and Sustainability) course, which seeks sustainable solutions to contemporary technological issues.

In our first term, students of all ages were encouraged to participate in a **'Foregoing for the Future' (#FFF)** initiative inspired by Greta

Thunburg's 'Fridays for the Future' movement to raise awareness of sustainability. At Green Shoots, students chose something to 'forego' (eating meat, running the air conditioning in their classroom, etc) in order to provide a tangible benefit to the future of our world. This was followed by a school-wide focus on the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals**, during which secondary students developed a project that was shared with their primary peers.

Progress on our **Sustainability Audit**, through which Green Shoots is working with Compass Education to identify our environmental footprint and then actively seek ways to engage our community to reduce our impact, was halted due to COVID. It will be relaunched as soon as circumstances allow.

In January 2020, our director, Catherine, attended the **COBIS** Bursars Conference in London where she was asked to participate in a session on sustainability in schools. Following the session, during which Green Shoots was praised by other participants for its comprehensive approach to sustainability and sustainable education, COBIS asked her to run a follow-up session for its Annual Conference, named 'Sustainability at the Heart of School Development'. The conference was cancelled due to COVID but is likely to take place in 2021.







LANGUAGE ACQUISITION



The year saw a consolidation of our **French mother tongue programme**, which had expanded significantly in 2018/19. We introduced the coordinated teaching of History for secondary students, though which French mother tongue students covered the same curriculum material as English-language students, thus expanding their use of the French language while maintaining full curriculum coverage.

This year for the first time we offered an expanded **Vietnamese mother tongue programme**, similar to our French programme (in addition to our Vietnamese foreign language programme and existing mother tongue programme). However, uptake was limited, with native speakers opting instead to study Vietnamese outside of school, and it was decided that the expanded programme would not continue into a second year at this time.

Green Shoots facilitated the study of **German** for families who wished their children to learn their mother tongue. We provided a teaching space and allocated teaching time to align with other students' language learning schedules.

Our **English as an Additional Language (EAL)** programme worked with children from Nursery to Year 8 through in-class support, one-on-one break out tuition, and group break-out classes. Vocabulary development focused on words needed in the classroom setting in order to build relevant language skills as quickly as possible. The loss of three months of face-to-face language building opportunities for our foreign-language learners was addressed through our Summer School programme, which built themes around the topics that had been covered during Crisis Schooling and allowed students to converse around these topics.





THE ARTS

It has been a difficult year for the arts, with only half of the school year on campus before our COVID closure, and only two months of on-site learning at the end of the year post closure (during which the focus of extracurricular activities became tailored academic support for students who had struggled with online learning, meaning other extracurricular activities, such as performance rehearsals, were put on hold). Before COVID, we had begun preparation for our annual **musical production**, *Alice*. Auditions had been held, roles allocated, costuming begun, and rehearsals launched. Online schooling from February to April made group rehearsals impossible and we eventually concluded that the end-of-year performance would not go ahead. But all was not lost: our staff made good use of the costumes to put on skits and keep students entertained through our online Friday Morning Assembly series, and we look forward to reigniting our students' passion for performance with a new focus on *Alice* when circumstances allow.

We held a fantastic Christmas Show, hosted for the second year in a row by the Anantara Resort, during which students and parents contributed their talents to a memorable performance. An end-of-year performance was pulled together in just seven weeks and involved over 50 students. Parents helped with costumes to create a fantastic end to the year.

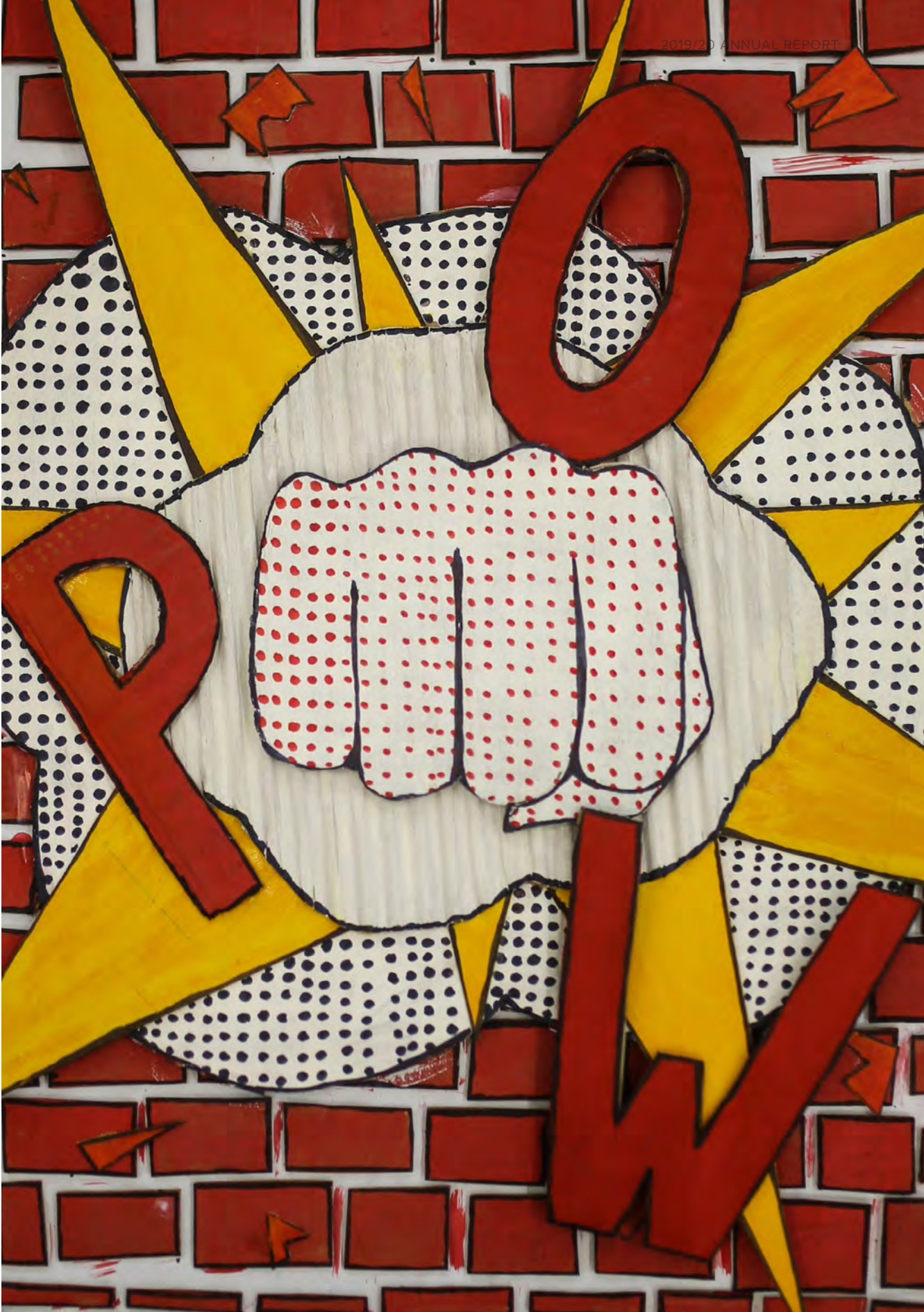


This year saw the expansion of our **individual music lessons** programme, with both piano and guitar breakout classes offered to primary and secondary students. These proved very popular, with waiting lists for both, and we look forward to expanding the programme in coming years.

In November we ran a **Craft Fair** at the Anantara Resort, and our Bamboo Market in late June gave students the opportunity to design, create and sell handmade items of jewelry and other crafts. Funds raised went to support children in need through two local charities: the Kianh Foundation and Children Education Foundation.

Both online and in school, the **Fine Arts** programme focused on drawing, painting, mixed media, and sculpture around themes relating to nature, the built environment, cultural celebrations, popular culture and identity. Students developed their own artistic skills and learned about artists and art movements using traditional and non-traditional art media to develop and express their artistic voice.







SPORTS & ECAs



Prior to the COVID closure, our **sports programme** focused on rugby, wrestling, acrobatic gymnastics, and volleyball. During our final school term, as we were allowed to operate on campus again, we ran our summer swimming programme and an abbreviated athletics programme in accordance with our annual sports plan.

The campus closure brought with it unique problems for our physical education programme, which we addressed through the introduction of online exercise classes led by our HPE teacher and demonstrated for students by our Head of School. Our COVID Lessons Learned exercise showed that many parents hoped for a more comprehensive online sports programme for their children if further lockdowns are enforced by the government, and this has been written into our lockdown planning for 2020/21.

Off school grounds, the year began with an expanded intra-school sporting challenge, which built upon the tournament launched last year

between Green Shoots, Hoi An International School, and Singapore International School (SIS). This year brought St Nicholas into the fold, with a first round competition hosted by SIS before COVID put a temporary stop to group sporting events. In December, and as part of our focus on sustainability, Green Shoots coordinated a group of 42 students to participate in a 2-kilometer run celebrating Hoi An's 20th anniversary as a UNESCO Heritage Site.

The Green Shoots **Extra Curricula Programme** began as normal, with a total of 16 activities offered before the Christmas break, ranging from Aikido to Cooking, French to Sustainable Crafts. Given the brevity of our time on campus between the Christmas and Tet breaks (2.5 weeks), there was no ECA programme planned for that term, and our post-Tet programme was cancelled due to the closure of our campus. During the final term of the school year, once students had returned to their classrooms, we used our ECA programme to offer support for learning to those in need after their three-month stint at home (see next section).





SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

From August to January, before our campus was forced to close, support for learning focused on the provision of English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Special Education Needs (SEN), as well as counselling for older students.

Other forms of support became necessary **during the three months we operated online**, as students, parents and teachers adapted to this New Normal. Our main focus was on support for **students**:

- *Technology*: For those without access to a laptop or other computing device, Green Shoots loaned out school devices. Our IT technician provided coaching to parents and students struggling with software or technical difficulties.
- *Emotional support*: We boosted our counselling service through which individual support was offered to students suffering from loneliness, stress, or other conditions related to our campus closure. Online get-togethers

and assemblies were introduced to rebuild a sense of community and shared experience.

- *Study skills advice*: Students were offered advice regarding the creation and maintenance of a good study space, eating and sleeping habits, and other aspects of maintaining a routine and a sense of 'familiar' amid so many changes.

To support **parents**, we developed a series of Parent Guides (one for each section of the school) outlining how parents could support their child's learning, communicate with the school about different issues, and understand the curriculum. Teachers also met with parents online to offer guidance and support.

Tailor-made Online Teaching Guidelines were developed for **staff** to help them transition from classroom-based to online teaching. Technical support in the form of group and individual training sessions was offered to teachers struggling with the expanded use of technology.





It was acknowledged after Crisis Schooling had ended that some faculty and parents felt they may have benefited from additional emotional support and altered communication with school leadership during our closure; points that have now been addressed through alterations to our parent and staff representative systems.

Upon reopening our campus in early May, we focused on developing systems to ensure that students whose studies had suffered during Crisis Schooling were back on track by the end of the school year. Our final term's ECA programme was given over to **support for students who had fallen behind or missed specific elements of their learning** during the closure (unlike regular ECAs, these sessions were offered free of charge). Each child was assessed by classroom and specialist teachers and a detailed list of individual needs was developed, from which a schedule appropriate to the needs of each child was built. The programme ran through until the penultimate week of school and allowed students to receive support ranging from individual tutorials to a short course of revision lessons with a group of peers.

The format of **end-of-year report cards** was amended to reflect not only the academic and social-emotional progress made by each child, as our reports do every year, but also the additional

learning that had taken place, particularly with reference to development of our eight core values and how these had been lived during the Crisis Schooling period. Reports put greater emphasis on formative assessment (progress over time) rather than summative assessment (end-of-period achievement), to reflect the year's reality. End-of-year three-way conferences between students, teachers and parents facilitated discussion of progress in all of these areas.

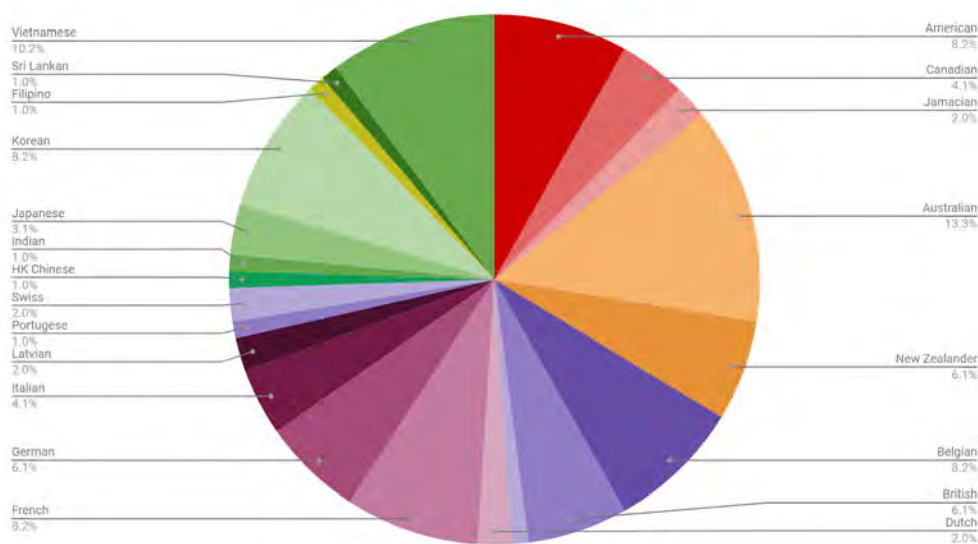


OUR STUDENTS

This year, Green Shoots educated **children from 22 countries**. The graph below indicates nationality as given upon registration at Green Shoots, although many students hold more than one nationality. Those identifying as being from the American

continent (shades of red) made up 14% of our student population, with another 19% (orange) from Australasia. Those from Europe (purple) were our largest group at 41% of all students, while those from Asia (green) made up the remaining 26%.

Green Shoots Student Nationalities (2019/20)



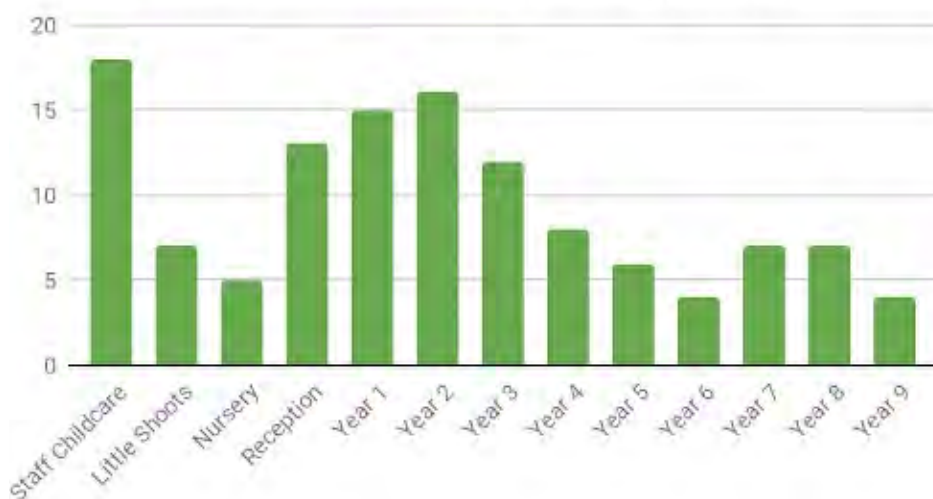


We saw growth in our Reception, Key Stage 1, and early Key Stage 2 classes, indicating strong potential for ongoing growth higher up the school as these students mature. We also had a bumper Staff Childcare class this year, reflecting the value of this group for our Vietnamese employees and their families, and the role the group plays in helping us recruit and retain highly qualified national staff. Primary remained our largest cohort of students, although we also saw some growth in secondary despite the fact that this was the first year since our CIE accreditation in which we did not run an IGCSE

programme (see page 17 for details).

All Green Shoots students demonstrated **exceptional learning** this year as they adapted to the changes forced upon us all. While all were recognised by their teachers and peers, the challenges that the year brought and the way in which they were overcome made this year's **end-of-year Awards Ceremony** an especially poignant event. Awards were earned by children from 6 to 14 years old in areas from Leadership to Sustainability, Sportsmanship to Art & Design.

Green Shoots Student Population (2019/20)





IGCSE RESULTS & ALUMNI

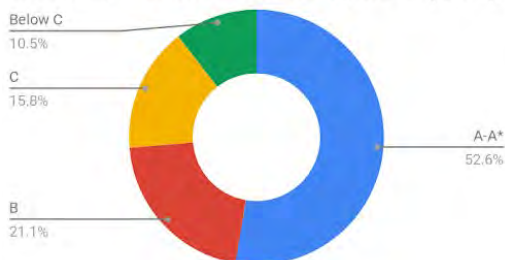
We are happy to report another excellent year of **IGCSE results** for those students who completed their education with us in June 2019 and whose exam results were obtained just prior to the launch of the 2019/20 academic year. They have now gone on to the next stage of their academic journey at IB schools around the world.

All of the four IGCSE students who graduated from Green Shoots in 2019 passed every exam they sat, and two received **'High Achievement' awards** for their Environmental Management studies. These add to the **'Top in Country' awards** won by Green Shoots students in previous years for the same course and for outstanding performance in foreign language studies.

Of the 21 exams our 2019 cohort of students sat between them, **more than half earned an A* or A**

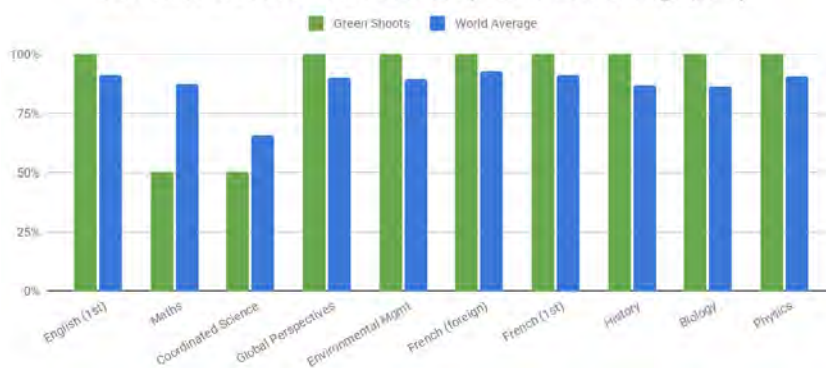
grade, indicating excellent academic performance. Almost all others exams returned with very strong B or C grades, and only 11% - 2 exams - earned below C ('A' to 'C' indicate very high academic performance, while the lowest pass is recorded at 'G'). These excellent results are tribute to our hard-working students and their teachers, who have kept **Green Shoots consistently outperforming most IGCSE schools around the world.**

Green Shoots IGCSE Awards by Grade (2019)





Green Shoots IGCSE A* to C Grades Compared to World Average (2019)



It was a difficult year for our most recent **alumni**, several of whom were undertaking their International Baccalaureate at schools around the world. Those in their first year (our IGCSE graduates mentioned here) found themselves having to undertake this challenging academic programme online, while missing out on its critical extra-curricula component. Those in their second and final year completed their high school education without exams or the opportunity to showcase their full potential and now face a future of an uncertain university experience or, if postponing further study, few

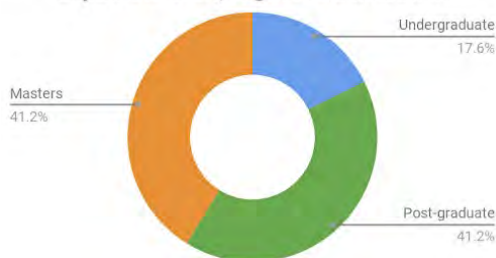
Gap Year opportunities. Nonetheless, this group is demonstrating resilience and fortitude as they move onto the next stage of their lives. One has opted to resit IB exams while also preparing for university entrance exams in his home country. Another has found temporary employment to cover his living costs later in his Gap Year, when he hopes to volunteer with an NGO helping refugees at sea in Europe. A third has begun her university career in the US, where she is now studying nursing through a combination of online and campus-based learning.

OUR FACULTY

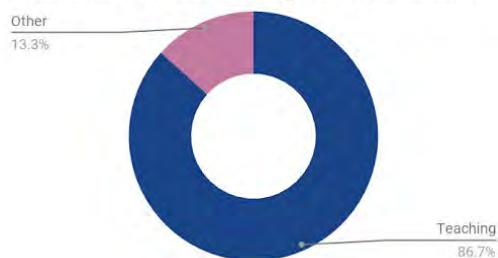
Green Shoots' full-time teaching faculty this year comprised **staff from seven different countries**: the UK, America, Australia, South Africa, France, New Zealand, and Vietnam. Part-time teaching staff also hailed from Korea and Germany. Each year, we attract **increasingly well qualified** staff to our school, which has now been operating for almost a decade. The below chart shows how the number

of **expatriate staff holding a Masters degree** has risen steadily since we opened our school and now stands at 41%. A further 41% hold post-graduate qualifications, while the remaining 18% have earned an undergraduate degree. Meanwhile, of the 15 **co teachers** employed by Green Shoots, 13 **hold a graduate-level teaching qualification**.

Expatriate Staff, Highest Qualification

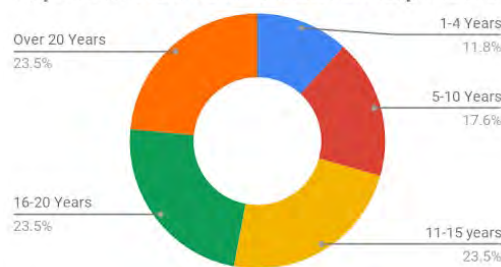


National Co Teachers, Highest Qualification



As well as recording a steady upgrading of our staff's qualifications, we are also seeing a year-on-year **increase in the experience that teaching professionals bring** to our school. In 2018/19 nine of our expatriate faculty had less than 10 years' experience when they joined Green Shoots while 10 people had 11 or more years'. By 2019/20, these numbers had moved to five and 11 respectively.

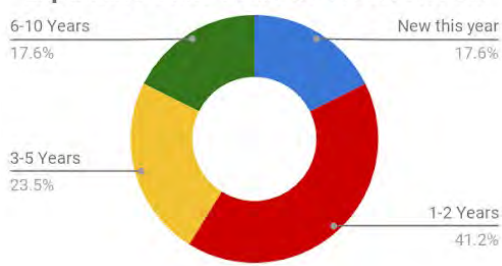
Expatriate Staff Years of Relevant Experience



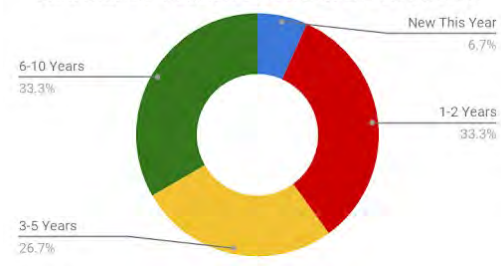
Once with our school, **teachers and co teachers remain committed to Green Shoots** longer than at many other international schools. Following a year of change in 2018/19, during which several staff took extended maternity leave and Green Shoots brought in new staff to replace them, the 2019/20 year saw a maturing of our faculty from an already-solid base. We took on three new teachers this year (one maternity cover and two as part of a planned programme expansion). Of **expatriate staff** continuing at Green Shoots from the previous year, 12% had already been with us for a full school year, 29% for two years, and **41% for at least three years**. Our **Vietnamese co-teachers** have been with the school even longer: this year, one third had been with us one or two years before the school year began, while **almost two thirds had spent at least 3 years at Green Shoots** (of which more than half have taught our students since at least 2014). We hired one new co-teacher in 2019/20.

Only two full-time expatriate members of staff left the school at the end of the 2019/20 year: Our retiring Head and our Year 1 teacher who held the maternity cover contract noted above.

Expatriate Staff Years at Green Shoots



National Co Teachers Years at Green Shoots



This was a challenging year for everyone and, Green Shoots would like to express its **thanks to our dedicated and hardworking staff** who kept the learning going despite the phenomenal personal and professional challenges faced by so many. Our teaching staff had to learn an entirely new way of teaching almost overnight, while many simultaneously found themselves trying to teach their students with their own children at home and also in need of support. During the final months of the year, all Green Shoots staff took a voluntary reduction in salary, and some accepted temporary

redundancy, as part of our effort to address the revenue losses noted on page 40. These sacrifices, undertaken by every member of staff (teaching and support), demonstrate the unity of vision and shared purpose at Green Shoots



OUR PARENTS



Parents are due a **debt of gratitude** this year while their children were learning at home. The situation that was forced upon us was challenging for everybody as we adjusted to a 'new normal' that may well continue to be part of our collective lives for some time to come. But while our students continued to learn and our teachers continued to teach (albeit both under new and stressful conditions), our parents found themselves taking on a whole new role: that of parent-teacher. As anyone who has attempted to homeschool will know, at the best of times this is a very complex role to play. This year, many of our parents had to combine it with often-challenging professional obligations, while non-native speakers struggled to support their children in English. Green Shoots would like to take this opportunity to thank our parents for the role they played while we were not able to invite their children onto campus.

Before and after our closure, when **events** were possible, parents played an active role in the

organization and management of various events (our Halloween party, Craft Day, end-of-year beach BBQ and pop-up BYO meal at school). They also took an active role **in the classroom**, where some acted as 'visiting experts' to support IPC units on issues where they could offer expertise.

The Green Shoots Parent Group has long held an informal **communication and peer-support** role, but it became clear during our closure that a more structured mandate in these areas would benefit all members of our community. For this reason, a new charter was developed over the summer break between 2019/20 and 2020/21 that created defined roles for members of our newly named **Parent Network** and ensures that every family will have a clear and direct way to communicate ideas, concerns and questions to their teacher, section head, and to our Head of School. We are excited to see this thrive in 2020/21.



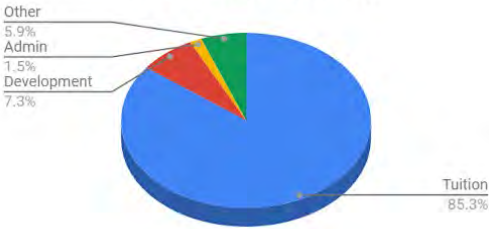


FINANCIAL REPORT

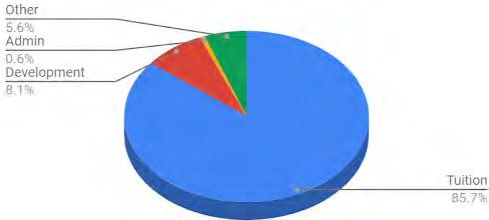
Green Shoots' revenue and expenditure for the 2019/20 year, and projections for the 2020/21 year, demonstrate our commitment to putting money where it matters.

All of our 2019/20 **revenue** came from **fees** (tuition, development, etc), and the school received no additional funding from banks, sister companies, investors, or other sources. We prioritised spending where it is most needed: in the classroom. Our reliance on **fees as our sole source of income** meant we were unable to turn to alternative funding sources when COVID hit our community and we experienced a related **drop in tuition revenue** (as some families who work in the badly hit tourism industry withdrew from the school or requested financial assistance).

19/20 Revenue (Actual)

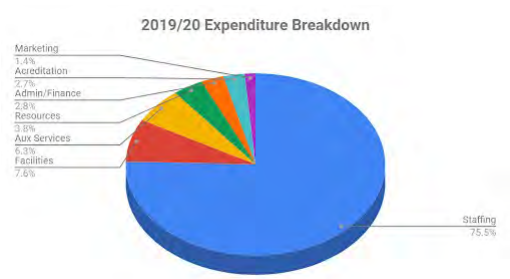


20/21 Revenue (Budgeted)





Our 2019/20 **expenditure**, as in previous years, focused primarily on staffing; an area in which our spending is in line with international school norms (between 70% and 80% of the total). Other spending included: *Facilities* (rental, improvement and maintenance), *Auxiliary Services* (F&B and bus), *Resources* (IT and teaching equipment, resources and consumables), *Administrative & Financial* (audit fees, corporate taxes, bank fees, insurance policies), *Accreditation & Memberships* (CIS, COBIS, Cambridge, etc), and *Marketing*. As shown in the chart, only 6.9% of our expenditure went to these last three areas, which are not directly related to teaching and learning, while 93.1% went to items that relate directly to our students’ learning experience: staffing, facilities, resources, meals, and transportation to/from school.



Our reduced income forced Green Shoots to undertake a **series of spending cuts** in the latter part of the year as we balanced our books. The belt tightening was shared across all areas of the school, although the brunt was borne by staff who are our

largest expense item and who undertook voluntary salary cuts, as noted on page 37. Rent reductions and other cost cutting measures also helped us keep the learning going as revenues fell. Bus fees, food, and other savings made during the period of online learning were returned to parents in the form of **credits**.

Our **Staff Support Fund** proved invaluable this year. It is financed using regular salary contributions from all staff members and designed to help Vietnamese staff when medical, personal or household emergencies arise that are not already covered by one of our employment benefits. Having allowed the fund to accumulate for some time with only limited withdrawals, we were able this year to offer financial assistance to staff whose family income had fallen due to COVID redundancies in and around Hoi An. We remain committed to this fund’s ongoing development.

We also operate a **Community Fund**, developed through annual contributions by the company and designed to offer bursary support to families in need. The fund is relatively small and was not sufficient to cover the full financial support needs of all of our families whose businesses were impacted by Vietnam’s border closure and lockdown. Green Shoots was able to offer some support, however, through a combination of flexible payment plans, deferred payments, and some bursaries for families facing particularly challenging circumstances.



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