



Teachers perform dragon dance at Minhang Experimental Primary School in Shanghai on February 19.

Pupils back in school for new semester

Yang Meiping

ABOUT 2.2 million children returned to kindergartens and schools in Shanghai on February 19 to begin the new semester.

To celebrate the Year of the Dragon, many schools decorated their campuses with loong, or Chinese dragons.

Students at Minhang Experimental Primary School's Chuncheng Campus dressed up in traditional Chinese costumes featuring dragons and brought gifts for their classmates.

At the gate, they were greeted with a drum and dragon dance performance and given red packets by the school administration.

According to Yang Chenyan, director of the campus' student affairs office, the red packets contained postcards with an award-winning painting by a student, which can be used to express best wishes to classmates while exchanging gifts.



Students in traditional Chinese costumes return to Minhang Experimental Primary School in Shanghai on February 19. — All photos by Dong Jun

The city's education authority also unveiled plans for the year.

According to the Shanghai Education Commission, the city plans to open approximately 40 new schools in



2024, as well as 30 new or renovated kindergartens.

It stated that the majority of newly built or renovated schools and kindergartens are located in densely

populated locations, such as the five "new cities," to ensure that children receive a high-quality education close to home.

To meet rising child-care demand, the city plans to create at least 7,000 nursery seats in community facilities and more than 3,000 in public kindergartens this year.

By the end of the year, at least 80 percent of local kindergartens will provide care for children under the age of three, and 80 percent of subdistricts and towns will have "baby houses," or community-based child care facilities, the commission said.

Once schools are built and expanded, the city will be able to welcome 7,000 additional first graders in primary schools and 10,000 more sixth graders in middle schools by the autumn season.

This year, all primary and middle schools will implement project-based learning programs, it noted.