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## EI article

### Deals worth £550 million struck by UK education businesses on trade mission to China

The British trade delegation has witnessed an increasing number of agreements of UK companies venturing into China. These include the signings of British nursery group, independent school, and higher education providers taking forward in new ventures in China in the coming years.

Among them, Malvern College signed to open its sixth international campus, and third on the Chinese mainland. The campus is due to open in 2019 and will eventually, together with the College's existing campus in Chengdu (opened in 2015), provide education for more than 1,000 children between the ages of 3 and 18. The Worcestershire boarding school already has a campus in Qingdao.

Meanwhile, Reigate Grammar School announced the opening of five schools in China, the first of which is scheduled to open in Nanjing in 2020, and the second in Shanghai in 2023. Development will be taken forward with the Kaiyuan Education Fund, with the backing of the China Development Bank.

In partnership between Ray Education, Advocate School, and Myddleton College will set up a school in Shanghai; Buckinghamshire girls' school Wycombe Abbey, will opening school in Hangzhou, with Silk Road Financing Holdings, Hangzhou, and Xiaoshan Urban Construction Investment Group as real estate investors; with Full Circle Education, St Bee's School, will be setting up in Shenzhen; and Durham School, with Tianjin International Education Limited, will open in Tianjin.

According to ISC Research, growing demand for Western-style, English language-based and bilingual education around the world is particularly strong in China, where much of the demand now comes from the local population, very often from among parents and students looking for pathways to English-speaking universities around the world.

While legislation requires that international private institutions must be Chinese-owned, they are nevertheless increasing in number – schools alone at an average growth of 18% per year since 2011, according to ISC's 2018 market report. While a range of models have been tried, franchised foreign-branded schools supported on a consultancy basis are most prevalent.

Among other British providers and institutions signing agreements last week, according to *Nursery World*, Busy Bees childcare announced their market entry with a commitment to establish 32 nurseries over the next five years.

The 'international pre-schools' will be based in locations including Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing and Xiamen. The deal is expected to generate almost £75 million over five years in projected income for Busy Bees and its Chinese stakeholder, Oriental Cambridge Education Group (OCEG).

Plans for a new campus for Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University were also announced during the Prime Minister's visit. The first campus, the result of a joint venture between Liverpool and Xi'an Jiaotong University, opened in 2006 in Suzhou.

Underscoring the total value of the deals done last week, Allan Walker, Malvern College's director of international schools pointed out to *EducationInvestor Global* that this figure excluded the benefits to suppliers.

"The success of these education ventures overseas," he said, "has a direct positive impact on a wide range of UK manufacturers and suppliers ranging from examination boards, architects and engineers through to furniture and textbook suppliers."

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