

Press release: PM hosts Chinese New Year reception at Downing Street

Theresa May has hosted a Chinese New Year reception at Downing Street to celebrate the enormous contribution of the Chinese community to British life and a 'Golden Era' for UK-China relations.

On Wednesday (21 February) the Prime Minister welcomed a number of Chinese students in Britain who are involved in higher education and language learning exchanges. She highlighted the academic achievements of the community and the talent they bring to our educational institutions, and pointed to the huge learning benefits to both countries through partnerships such as the UK-China mathematics teacher exchange, which has been extended for a further two years to 2020.

Building on her recent trip to China alongside 50 businesses and organisations from across the country, the Prime Minister also welcomed guests from a range of sectors with trade links to China.

British nursery provider Busy Bees, who secured a significant early years education deal with the Oriental Cambridge Education Group during the Prime Minister's visit to China, were also in attendance. The partnership between these two businesses will generate £75m in exports in the next five years and deploy 20 British teachers to China each year.

Andrew Wong, Head Chef and owner of Michelin star restaurant A. Wong in London's Victoria, was the guest chef for the reception.

The Prime Minister also presented James Wong, Chair of the Birmingham Chinese Festival Committee, with a Point of Light Award in recognition of his inspiring work to attract thousands of visitors to the city, creating the UK's largest Chinese New Year festival. His restaurant also gives hundreds of free meals to elderly people in the local community.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

It was great to welcome people from all parts of the United Kingdom to Downing Street to celebrate Chinese New Year, the vibrancy of the Chinese community in Britain, and the deepening ties between our two countries. I was delighted to take a 50-strong business delegation with me on my recent trip to China, and found a real enthusiasm for the links between us and the opportunities we share.

But the ties that bind our country are of course about more than just business – they're about people.

James Wong's huge contribution to life in Birmingham is one shining example of someone who has helped broaden and deepen our cultural ties and I was pleased to award him a Point of Light.

I would like to extend my best wishes to everyone celebrating this special day, as we mark the Year of the Dog and a golden era of UK-China relations.

James Wong, Chair of Birmingham Chinese Festival Committee, said:

I'm fiercely passionate about raising awareness of Chinese culture and supporting the Chinese community.

Birmingham is a fantastic, multicultural city that endorses diversity and I feel fortunate to have had the backing of so many wonderful friends and colleagues on the 'Chinese Festival Committee' and beyond. I look forward to seeing our great city continue to work closely and hopefully welcome more investment from China in years to come.

Andrew Wong, Head Chef at A. Wong and guest chef at the reception, said:

Chinese New Year is the biggest celebration for my family and for the whole of China, and it's a time of year where family time is truly celebrated.

It's wonderful that Downing Street takes the time out to celebrate this event and to celebrate the diversity of London – and obviously the Chinese community is a big part of that diversity.