

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oxford University Press commissioned by the Otsu City Board of Education in Shiga as partner in the “Research and Development of ICT-driven Foreign Language Teaching Methodology” project.

Release Date: August 20, 2015

Oxford University Press (located in Minato-ku, Tokyo; represented by Managing Director Kiyokazu Nakamura) has been selected to partner with the Otsu City Board of Education in Shiga on a project to research and develop an ICT-based teaching methodology for elementary school Foreign Language Activities classes. The Otsu City government, led by Mayor Naomi Koshi, will establish a leading English education programme for 37 public elementary schools, using Oxford University Press materials, customised lesson plans and teacher training. The project is scheduled to run until the end of March 2018.

Overview

The Japanese government introduced Foreign Language Activities to elementary school education for fifth and sixth graders in 2011, with plans to incorporate English language classes into the official curriculum of elementary education by 2020, urging educational institutions as well as local governments in Japan to focus more on English language education for children. Since 2014, the Otsu City government has introduced several schemes to enhance English language training at public schools as part of a wider educational plan for facilitating international understanding, including employing more assistant language teachers (ALT), exploring English teaching methods that harness information and communications technology (ICT), and experimenting with foreign language activities for children in early elementary school years. In October of the same year, the Board of Education held an open tender to find a partner for their “Research and Development of an ICT-driven Foreign Language Teaching Methodology” project with a total budget of ¥161 million. The applicants were required to provide a detailed proposal for materials, training and assessment before being approved to conduct a nine-week pilot programme in a city school. Oxford University Press was announced as the winning bid on June 6th.

The project consists of a syllabus designed to not only help children improve their English skills, but to nurture their “ability to live”, as stated in the Ministry national curriculum guidelines for elementary schools. This “ability” encompasses communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking skills. The project also requires an extensive teacher training programme, created to help elementary school teachers conduct English lessons confidently and consistently.

The programme will be further developed in 5 model schools from September 2015 before being rolled out to all 37 public elementary schools in the city at the start of the 2016 academic year.

Through collaborating with teachers, technology partners and academic researchers at the University of Oxford, Oxford University Press works to create the best possible environment for learning and teaching. With a history dating back to 1478 and over 50 years' experience in Japan's educational industry, Oxford University Press is most widely known as a book publisher, however it also provides a wide range of educational services, working with institutions and teachers to meet the changing needs of students at all ages and levels. Oxford University Press is driven by its mission and belief that education changes lives and it strives to create vibrant classrooms which prepare students and teachers for the global stage.

[Contact]

For more details, please contact us.

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About Oxford University Press

For over 500 years, Oxford University Press, a department of Oxford University, has demonstrated its commitment to furthering the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford University Press is the world's largest university press publishing over 6,000 new titles each year from dictionaries and scholarly books to textbooks, readers and children's books, and has a presence in over 50 countries world-wide.

In 1957 Oxford University Press opened its branch office in Tokyo and continues to work in partnership with teaching professionals in Japan to provide educational support services that meet the changing needs of educators and learners. With satellite offices in Osaka and Fukuoka, Oxford University Press strives to improve language education nationwide through consultation, the selection of teaching materials, building curricula and teacher training. It is proud to work with the finest authors and educators, sponsoring speakers to present at conferences and arranging teacher-training workshops across the country.

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Managing Director: Kiyokazu Nakamura

Establishment: November 1st, 1957

Capital: 89,824,000 yen

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[APPENDIX]

Project Key Features

• Teaching Materials

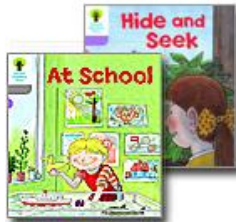
The curriculum will consist of best-selling English Language Teaching (ELT) materials popular in educational institutions all over the world and story books used to teach literacy in UK primary schools. Children will experience natural English in familiar, practical settings relevant to their daily lives, while also exploring cultural aspects of foreign countries.

Main Components



Let's Go Series

Developed for non-native English speaking children by experienced teachers in Japan and Taiwan, Let's Go has sold an accumulated total of 23,000,000 copies in many countries since its first edition in 1992, with renewed editions reflecting the needs of the times. Let's Go has been adopted as a government authorised textbook in Thailand, Vietnam, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.



Oxford Reading Tree

A multi-level literacy programme used in 80% of primary schools in the UK. It is a collection of story books filled with humour written in English natural to native-speakers. Oxford Reading Tree is familiar to many readers in Japan, and since 2013 has been part of the “City Education Promotion Master Plan” in Osaka public schools.



Classic Tales

A series of stories collected from well-known folklore and fairy tales from around the world, such as “The Enormous Turnip” and “Jack and the Beanstalk”. Vivid illustrations with simple vocabulary and grammar aid understanding for beginner students.

Teaching Style

Otsu City elementary schools are equipped with computers and widescreen TVs. The curriculum includes a range of digital materials to capture student interest and provide variety to the presentation of language. Digital textbooks, narrated e-book stories, games and interactive activities ensure students are engaged and enjoy the learning process.



Classroom Presentation Tool
(from Let's Go Level 1, Unit 3)

Proficiency levels will be checked against a comprehensive Can-do list that clearly indicates target language acts. Self-assessment review cards allow children to evaluate their own achievements, not only helping teachers to measure the effectiveness of their classes but also helping children to develop self-reflection skills. Speaking and listening tests in the 5th and 6th grades will also provide a measure of the programme's effectiveness.

Teacher Support

The curriculum has been designed to be easy to understand and implement, by providing a clear, consistent methodology throughout the term and across all grades. A continuous professional development programme has been designed, incorporating regular workshops with Oxford University Press teacher trainers to allow Otsu teachers to develop their skills in a supportive, collaborative environment, along with school visits, class observations and consultations. The goal is to support teachers as they develop into confident, independent language instructors.

[Contact]

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