

## Advanced Digital & Science Centre



Phased over a period of three years and supported with a £500,000 investment secured by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) via the Government's Local Growth Fund, the Henley College Advanced Digital and Science Centre created 1,480 square metres of digital spaces within four areas of the college. This has enabled 110 new learners to benefit from leading science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) related facilities. This is having a major impact across several key sectors, including digital skills, engineering, and applied life sciences.

Despite Oxfordshire's rich research and development traditions, the area's STEAM provision had historically struggled to keep up with the rapid pace of change in Oxfordshire's business base. Research in 2014 developed as part of our initial City Deal negotiations identified that less than 5% of government investment into further education directly supported STEAM based subjects, whilst over 20% of our businesses were STEAM based. When future funding opportunities arose through Local Growth Fund investment soon after, we were delighted that the FE sector responded to this evidence, and we were able to invest significant capital investment into Oxfordshire's STEAM provision that will support residents and businesses for decades to come, including the Advanced Digital & Science Centre within Henley College.



The Cuthbert Suite (named after their late Deputy Principal, Simon Cuthbert) has provided the College with an iconic and innovative area which has been welcomed by all stakeholders, particularly students. The new hub accommodates pop-up enterprise spaces, innovation hubs and digital skills teaching spaces along with areas to support students including careers and student services. There is full Wi-Fi connectivity and smart screens throughout with futuristic style booths to enable group student work and presentations. The

aim is to prepare students for their future careers by embedding entrepreneurial and employability skills. The FEC/ESFA (Full Economic Costing / Education & Skills Funding Agency) were also impressed with all of the areas developed using this LEP grant to good effect.

<https://www.henleyherald.com/2019/10/16/new-college-digital-hub-named-after-late-deputy-principal/>



An engineering facility has supported a new Digital Learning Lounge with new PCs and collaborative learning spaces and a new STEAM Centre which has provided a new electronic engineering laboratory for the promotion of robotics, plus a breakout space promoting STEAM careers. This intervention has enabled the college to offer a wider range of courses/programmes which compliment/enhance the existing

curriculum offer and specifically target a key government priority. The College plans to use this intervention to further target new learners as part of the T level introduction.

A new Arts Studio has improved and enhanced the student experience. The open horseshoe layout has provided a more creative space allowing students to experience a workshop environment. The teachers can also use multiple facilities at ones which creates a cohesive learning space for the sharing of skills. The spacious white design also allows students to use the area as a gallery enabling them to showcase their work.

Students have said how much they love the open bright area as they feel more like professional artists in a workshop rather than school children in a classroom space. The grades have also improved since the move from three small rooms to a professional open area as the students are happier in the environment and they are able to use the space even when not in class.

A refurbished Digital STEAM hub has facilitated the introduction of an AppleMac (approx. 50 machines) suite, which did not previously exist. Students have as a result been introduced to creative and business software and an industry standard work environment with a mixture of IT/Mac 'open plan' classrooms integrated with team working business working environment.

Students have welcomed access to such a facility, the equipment/furniture and for the College it has supported the increase in student numbers.