



COLLEGES IN THE BLACK COUNTRY

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The depth of provision provided by the Colleges in the Black Country is truly impressive – from the number of subjects covered and the range of qualifications to the best-in-class facilities and innovative ways of learning.

The City of Wolverhampton College, for example, boasts a new state-of-the-art Construction Innovation Centre.

Director of the Faculty of Technology Mike Hughes said: “The centre’s official opening ceremony was performed by the people that made it all possible; it was a People’s Opening thanking all those who have played a part in the success of the department so far.

“This was a very different way of opening a new £5 million development, but it reflected the innovative way we approach all our work with students and employers.”

The Centre is part of a £14 million redevelopment of the Wellington Road campus, which has also seen a new nursery, sports centre and floodlit all-weather pitch built.

The Centre has workshops for brickwork and electrical installation, and classrooms dedicated to skills such as carpentry, plumbing, painting and decorating and welding and fabrication. There is also a modern construction techniques arena which offers bespoke training for businesses in offsite construction, new and green technologies and sustainable buildings.

The centre has gained acclaim, support and sponsorship from national and regional agencies and employers.

Mike added: “We aim not only to equip students with the skills they need to work in construction but also to engage them in cutting edge innovation and practice to enable them to become future leaders in the sector.”

CASE STUDY

Impressive depth and range
of vocational education



Retail students at Dudley College are one step ahead following the opening of a Retail Outlet within the college open to staff and students.

The students who are already taught in retail themed classrooms, where they develop their selling and stock control, customer service and management skills, are using the latest technology to enable them to gain real customer service experience.

The 'Convenience Store' which sells a range of goods, from stationery to handbags and jewellery to greetings cards, was officially opened by Principal Lowell Williams, who was first to make a purchase. The shop is equipped with the latest Electronic Point Of Sale (EPOS) equipment.

Student Manpreet Kler studied Retail one day a week for two years while still at Coseley School and



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achieved distinction * in BTEC First Diploma Retail Level 2. Manpreet is now going to study a Level 3 qualification. He said: "The course has given me real life practical experience of working with customers and prepared me for full-time study."

Rosalind Wood, Curriculum Leader for Retail said, "This is a great opportunity for students to bring their classroom learning to life in a practical way." Staff and students at Halesowen College are sharing digital teaching and learning inspiration with teachers and pupils in Italy.

Student Learning Advocates Nichola Payne and Alex Layton accompanied Learning Development Manager Lee Fletcher and Learning Resources Assistant Claire Walker on a visit to the Istituto Antonio Tambosi in Trento to share ideas and learning resources.

The Digital Inspiration project, funded by the British Council, is designed to develop new interactive learning materials to engage reluctant learners and the College was chosen on the basis of its ICT excellence.

During the visit Lee and Claire demonstrated how the College uses interactive learning and digital communication methods to enhance the student experience.

Nichola and Alex explained the role of the Learning Advocates, a new College idea where enthusiastic IT-aware students help teaching staff to develop and use ICT resources in the classroom.

Nichola, aged 18, who is studying the IT Practitioner's National Diploma, said: "I especially enjoyed the science lesson and the day where Alex and I did some translating for the librarian, which made me feel of use to the school over there.

"I also enjoyed the presentation we gave and I hope it gave the teachers and students a valuable insight into how we learn and teach at our College."

