

Bucks Free Press

Multi-million pound expansion begins at The Highcrest Academy in Hatters Lane, High Wycombe



Anna Bannister, Head of Sixth Form at Highcrest, with Principal Glen Burke

A High Wycombe school is set to undergo a multi-million pound refurbishment as part of a major expansion project to meet increased demand for school places in the town.

A £3.3 million scheme at The Highcrest Academy will see a new sixth form centre, a dining area and a science laboratory added, plus an extension to the sports hall.

The project will free up space for extra classrooms to accommodate an extra 28 pupils per year group.

The work, being carried out by Bucks County Council using Government Basic Need Funding, has begun this month and is due to be completed in time for the beginning of the next academic year in September 2018.

Under the plans, the old sixth form building at the school in Hatters Lane will treble in size over two floors and will be remodelled to provide a modern sixth form learning resource centre.

The canteen and kitchen is also set to be extended - trebling it in size - in a bid to create a "bright and modern" dining area.

A second floor above the front of the sports hall will be added to provide a new dance studio and fitness room, a state of the art gym and an extra PE theory classroom. The studio and gym will also be available for community use.

An IT room and storeroom will also be transformed into a new large science laboratory.

14 November 2017

Bucks Free Press

The huge project comes as an increase in the number of housing planned for the area has put major pressure on school places.

The current Pupil Admission Number (PAN) for Highcrest is 152 with a sixth form capacity of 130 – a total capacity of 890.

The proposed admission numbers from September 2018 onwards will be 180 with a sixth form for 180 pupils, giving a total capacity of 1,080 as the school fills over the next five years.

Mike Appleyard, cabinet member for education and skills at Bucks County Council, said: "In the High Wycombe area there's a need to expand school places by four to five forms of entry over the next three or four years - that's the equivalent of a new school.

"I'm delighted the refurbishment work to accommodate an additional form of entry at Highcrest will help to meet some of the increased demand."

Paul Shaw, assistant head teacher at Highcrest, said the refurbishment work is "fantastic news" for the school.

He said: "The results for our sixth form last year were quite amazing. We smashed our previous record by 17 per cent and our A*-C results were 13 per cent above the national average, with an incredible 89 per cent of our students achieving A* to Cs.

"However, most pleasing of all is how we continue to improve year on year and how the majority of our courses were over-subscribed.

"So my question and challenge was: how can we make our Sixth Form even better? Happily, this wonderful refurbishment enabled through these expansion works will help us, and I am confident that both the academy and Sixth Form will continue to go from strength to strength."