

10 September 2010

Press Release

CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE BRINGS VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE

A new £461,000 skills centre in Ely took its first learners this week, bringing vocational training to students in an innovative move by Cambridge Regional College, in conjunction with the Cambridge Area Partnership.

The Old Gym at City of Ely Community College has been transformed into a superbly-equipped learning centre with hair and beauty salons, production kitchens, a bistro/internet café and an IT suite where pupils will be taught by CRC lecturers.

The East Cambs Skills Centre, managed and staffed by CRC, has been built to take pupils from four secondary schools – City of Ely CC and Witchford, Soham and Bottisham Village Colleges.

Amongst many other opportunities, Year 10 and 11 pupils will use the centre to study Diploma courses in hair and beauty, hospitality and IT, putting their skills into practice in the new bistro and salons.

The project has been funded by £231,700 from Cambridgeshire County Council and a £100,000 grant from the East of England Development Agency, with CRC contributing £73,300, Ely CC £55,000 and Witchford VC £1,000.

CRC Associate Principal Laurence Wells, who is heading the development of the centre, said: “This is a great opportunity for Cambridge Regional College to bring vocational training to students who might not otherwise be able to travel into Cambridge for our courses.

“The site has been totally transformed and is now superbly equipped with hair and beauty salons, industrial production kitchens, a bistro for the students to practice in and an IT suite with 20 stations.

“Our staff will teach the Diplomas in the centre for two days a week, and we also plan to provide literacy courses, Foundation Learning, Apprenticeship programmes and training to help people get back into employment. – the centre will be a real asset for East Cambridgeshire.”

The first pupils in the centre were 24 Year 10 students drawn from partner schools in Ely, Witchford and Soham, who started a two-year Hair and Beauty Diploma on Thursday (9 September).

“We will build up the numbers of Diploma students gradually this year, and are planning school taster days to let more pupils find out about vocational courses. This is a great opportunity for pupils to add to their skills and qualifications and learn from highly qualified and experienced professionals,” said Laurence.

Catherine Jenkinson-Dix, Principal of the City of Ely Community College said: “We are delighted to host the new East Cambs Skills Centre here on our site, and to be part of a forward-looking partnership which will enrich the lives of all students in East Cambridgeshire. In light of the recently announced Wolf Review of Vocational Education in the UK, this initiative is both a timely and highly innovative response to the needs of our young people.”

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

For more information, please contact Lynn O’Shea, PR & Events Co-ordinator, on 01223 418773 or email loshea@camre.ac.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

Cambridge Regional College is the second largest provider of full-time education for 16 to 19 year-olds in the eastern region. The College has around 3,500 full-time and 6,000 part-time students. Students come in from a 40-mile radius, covering Cambridge and its surrounding villages, eastern Bedfordshire, northern Essex and western Suffolk.

Over 80 per cent of full-time students are aged 16 to 18 years old and come to the College after secondary school; the rest are mature students, studying on a range of Access to Higher Education and vocational programmes. The College offers the largest and most comprehensive range of vocational courses in Cambridgeshire.