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New learning hub opens

STUDENTS will be able to maximise their learning thanks to the opening of a **£250,000 sixth form centre**, fulfilling a long-held dream of a leading educationalist.

The newly created facility at Conyers School, Yarm, has also allowed a major refurbishment of the library which will benefit all students from Year 7 to 13.

The development project has come about thanks to partnership working between the school and the Spark Education Trust which operates it. For Spark chief executive Louise Spellman the project realises a long-held ambition from when she used to teach English at the school and was its former headteacher.

She said: "This is not just a building it's a statement and as a former head it has been my

dream for a long time to have something that will inspire learning, foster ambition and provide students with the skills they need to thrive in the modern world.

"My background as an English teacher means I love to read and improving literacy has been my passion. So to provide a new sixth form centre





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which also benefits the library is so exciting.”

Conyers headteacher Chris Coleman added: “We are very proud of our sixth form offering which sees consistently strong outcomes at A Level and with technical qualifications. This allows our students to move on to high quality destinations such as Oxbridge and Russell Group universities. “But we are about so much more than just outcomes. Being at Conyers is also about the experience, including enrichment, support and serving as mentors to our younger students. It is a more personalised approach with one-to-one advice and guidance and the new centre allows them the space to flourish.”

Head boy Ned Parker and head girl Hannah Dabbous were delighted with the new facilities. Ned, 18, of Yarm, who is studying A levels in maths, physics and PE, said: “It is fantastic. We now have space and an environment that is peaceful and quiet in which to study. I would recommend Conyers any time as it is small, so you get one-to-one support and the form groups and class sizes are small too.”

Hannah, 18, of Yarm, who is studying A Levels in maths, chemistry and physics, added: “This is such a great asset to have. Years 12 and 13 used to fight for space and we now have more than enough which will be invaluable. The study and social spaces used to be together and now they are separate which will be really beneficial and will make a massive difference to my learning.”

Guests invited to the opening ceremony included the chair of governors Julia Ardley and Stockton Borough Council’s head of service for education and inclusion Vanessa Housley.

Mrs Ardley said: “This is something we have been trying to get off the ground for a long time so I am thrilled to see it open. Previous sixth formers did us proud but there has always been a sense that while the teaching was great the facilities were letting everyone down. This new space is vital to nurture the students and help them find their feet.”

Mrs Ardley added: “It is so important to grow our post-16 offering in Stockton and this strengthens that for our young people. I’m delighted to see something fresh and new that has had student input in its making. I can see that the students are so enthusiastic and proud of this new facility.”

Librarian Kim Dawson loved her new facility. “It is a lovely environment and the students enjoy coming here, which is the most important thing,” she said.

Applications for 2026 are now open.

