

# New campus at James Gillespie's now open



The Education Convener Councillor Paul Godzik was accompanied by Dr Alasdair Allan Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages at the official opening ceremony of what is said to be one of the most unique high school buildings in Scotland earlier today.

They were accompanied by Head Teacher Donald Macdonald and Paul McGirk, Chief Executive of Hub South East Scotland, the Council's development partner to declare the Malala Building at James Gillespie's High School open.



The high school rebuild is part of the £42.8m James Gillespie's Campus Project includes new buildings constructed across all parts of the campus serving pupils aged from 3 to 18 years in nursery, primary and high schools all on the same site.

The first phase, opened in August 2013, was completed with a new nursery, two new classrooms and a gym at James Gillespie's Primary School and the delivery of a new synthetic pitch at Thirlestane Road for the high school.

The second phase, the construction of the Malala Building which is the main teaching block for the high school, was completed in April and consists of 57 classroom spaces with full-height glazing to maximise daylight and views; four collaboration spaces along the central spine to the building linked by external courtyards and bespoke dining and social spaces which can also be used for learning and teaching.

The final phase of works will result in the demolition of the

remaining buildings forming the old high school to allow delivery of new sports and performance buildings. The project is due for completion in time for the start of the 2016/17 school year. In addition, the A-listed Bruntsfield House at the centre of the campus is also undergoing a major refurbishment.

The high school replacement project has received significant Scottish Government funding through the 'Scotland's Schools for the Future' programme which is managed by the Scottish Futures Trust. The project is being delivered by Hub South East Scotland with Morrison Construction being the contractors.

Cllr Paul Godzik said: "I'm delighted to see the progress that has been made on this project, and to welcome the Minister Dr Alasdair Allan to James Gillespie's High School. I know the staff and pupils are excited to be in the new teaching block which is really impressive. This is a modern, fit-for-purpose facility which is unique in Scotland with its courtyards and collaborative break out areas and will deliver an unrivalled learning environment for pupils.

"Work is already underway on the sports and performing arts buildings which will be finished next year and give the James Gillespie's community a school they can rightly be proud of for many years to come."

Minister for Learning, Alasdair Allan, said: "This is an exciting day for pupils and staff at James Gillespie's High School and I was delighted to be at the official opening of the new Malala Building. The Scottish Government is committed to providing modern and sustainable new schools through our Schools for the Future programme and I'm pleased we could provide more than £20 million towards the cost of this project.

"The design of the new school provides modern and inspiring

spaces for pupils to learn in and I'm sure it will be enjoyed by generations to come. I look forward to seeing the remaining school buildings when they are completed next year."

Donald Macdonald said: "Pupils and staff are hugely impressed with our new Malala building. It's a wonderful facility – the design and layout is like no other school. There's a real feeling of light and space with one side of every classroom glazed to allow in lots of natural light and giving views across Edinburgh.

"In fact the building's been so well received by pupils that despite being on exam leave, many of our senior pupils chose to come into the new building to study with friends rather than stay at home!"

Paul McGirk, said: "We're delighted to have handed over the new Malala Building on time and on budget and are proud that initial feedback has been extremely positive. It's been a great team effort and I would like to thank colleagues within the City of Edinburgh Council and all of the designers and builders who helped make it possible.

"Our contractor, Morrison Construction, is now continuing on site to create the new sports and performance blocks to the same high quality standard for next year, ensuring modern, fit for purpose educational facilities for staff and pupils on the Gillespie's Campus."

Pupils were asked to come up with a new name for the building and they chose to name it after Malala Yousafzai the 17-year-old female education activist from Pakistan.

As a Hub development, the project is delivering a number of community benefits. It is supporting up to 250 jobs during construction, as well as 27 modern apprenticeships and a host of work experience opportunities. Already, more than 500 days of work placement have been undertaken, and there have been almost 3,000 visits by/to schools, colleges and universities

in relation to the project.