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HRUC's new inclusive learning centre welcomes first cohort of students



Barra Hall, a new specialist learning centre for young people with complex needs, welcomed its very first cohort of students earlier this month.

Warm welcome

Led by Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges (HRUC) in partnership with Hillingdon Council, the Grade II listed Barra Hall in Hayes offers a high-quality, inclusive learning environment for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Featuring modern, accessible classrooms and sensory spaces, as well as a training kitchen, Barra Hall will help to equip young people with the skills and confidence they need to thrive as adults.

Following the centre's official opening in July, the first cohort began their studies at Barra Hall in the first week of September.

An inclusive community

Tala Badr, Lecturer in Foundation Learning - PMLD/SLD, explained that students can expect practical, engaging lessons designed to improve and enhance their individual strengths, interests, and ways of communicating.

She said: "I feel incredibly fortunate to be joining Barra Hall for its very first academic year. Having worked in SEN education, I am passionate about creating a learning environment where every learner feels safe, valued and understood.

"Being part of a new campus gives us a special opportunity to build an inclusive community shaped around our learners and their individual needs from the very beginning.

"Most importantly, I want every learner to enjoy coming to Barra Hall, build confidence, and make meaningful progress in their own way."

Educational adventure

Iwona Podstepska, Lecturer in PMLD/Foundation Department, added that students' personalised learning programmes will be developed in close cooperation with their families.

She said: "Our students at Barra Hall have already started settling into their new groups. We have been accommodating their needs and making sure that they feel welcomed, safe and happy.

"We want to thank all the parents who already have given us such positive, heart-touching feedback. We also appreciate all the positive reactions from the students themselves, which indicates that our newly opened provision – in such an excellent, historical, beautiful building – will be their wonderful educational adventure, before moving on to adult life."

A centre of excellence

Nadia Khan, HRUC's Interim Assistant Principal for High Needs and Additional Learning Support, said: "Welcoming our first cohort of learners to Barra Hall marks an important milestone in HRUC's commitment to developing high-quality, inclusive provision for young people with SEND. It represents more than the opening of a new learning environment; it is an opportunity to create meaningful pathways that enable every learner to develop their independence, confidence, and aspirations for the future.

"Our vision is to ensure that learners receive a personalised and ambitious education that reflects their individual strengths, needs and goals. Through a strong focus on communication, life skills, independence, and preparation for adulthood, we want every

learner to have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

“I am proud of the dedication our colleagues have shown in establishing the provision. We look forward to working closely with learners, families and our partners to build a centre of excellence that delivers lasting outcomes for young people and their families.”

Barra Hall forms part of HRUC’s wider SEND and High Needs provision, which supports over 850 learners with tailored education programmes and internships to set them up for personal and professional success.

Note to editors: Following a merger in 2023, HRUC (Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges) has rapidly evolved into a thriving educational hub with three colleges and a strong apprenticeship provision. The diverse and aspiring college group now serves nearly 15,000 learners across west and south London, offering a range of courses, including A-Levels, vocational programmes, T-Levels, higher education courses and apprenticeships. The College group also proudly supports over 850 learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), providing tailored programmes and internships to help them thrive.