

Date: 18.06.19

Publication: BBC News

Unique Users: 16,327,854



## Sir James Dyson donates £19m to his old school in Holt



Sir James Dyson said because of English Baroness Lockhart's (his old headmistress) "generosity" he was able to continue at the school.

Billionaire businessman Sir James Dyson has donated £18.75m to his former school, whose "generosity" helped pay for his education after his father died.

The cash will fund the building of a centre for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education at Gresham's school in Holt, Norfolk.

The inventor and engineer said it will "inspire and educate more brilliant young minds".

He started at the school aged nine in 1956.

The co-education, private day and boarding school was founded in 1555 and Sir James attended for ten years.

Sir James' father, who was head of the Classics department, died soon after he started the school.

The school supported him financially afterwards, offering him and his brother scholarships to stay on and board.

"The generosity of the school, meant I could continue there after his death," he said.

The STEAM centre will be housed in the Dyson Building, which will be designed by Dyson's architect Wilkinson Eyre. It will be completed by September 2021, the school said.

It will "enable new approaches to teaching", will be equipped with the "latest technology" and will teach robotics, programming and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Sir James said: "I've observed that from the age of around six, children are very engaged. They are inventive, dreaming up ideas, and curious, wanting to know how they can be made."

"But these traits get stamped out of them, partly by the system and partly because the teaching of these subjects in schools has not kept up with the pace of technological change."

Sir James has supported engineering in the UK through the James Dyson Foundation which introduces young people to the subject.

The founder has donated £12m to the Imperial College, to open the Dyson School, and £1m to the University of Cambridge.

Sir James, who invented the revolutionary bagless vacuum cleaner, and his family were ranked as fifth richest in the UK in this year's Sunday Times Rich List with an estimated fortune of £12.6 billion.