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## NORTH NORFOLK NEWS

### 'An immense impact' - Sir James Dyson donates £19m for education centre at his former school



*Sir James Dyson was born Cromer and joined Gresham's aged nine, attending the school from 1956 to 1965. Picture: PA Wire/PA Images*

Education at Gresham's School in Holt is set to be revolutionised by a £18.75 million donation from former pupil and billionaire inventor, Sir James Dyson.

Education at Gresham's School in Holt is set to be revolutionised by a £18.75 million donation from former pupil and billionaire inventor, Sir James Dyson.

Sir James, 72, is funding a new centre for science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) education, to be called the Dyson Building.

The founder and chief executive of Dyson Ltd has always been grateful to Gresham's, after the school continued to fund his education after the death of his father at age nine.

Douglas Robb, Gresham's headmaster, said the donation was "by far" the largest the school had ever received, and it would have an "immense impact" for decades to come.



*Sir James Dyson, left, with Gresham's School's former headmaster Logie Bruce-Cockburn. Mr Bruce-Cockburn gave Sir James financial support to continue his education following the untimely death of his father, Alec, who taught classics at the school. Picture: Gresham's*

Mr Robb said: "We are hugely grateful to Sir James and are excited that our partnership will be a long lasting one."

"We look forward to working with the James Dyson Foundation to develop new and inventive approaches to teaching and with the Dyson Institute of Engineering and Technology to explore exciting long-term opportunities for our students to pursue careers in engineering."

Dyson's architects Wilkinson Eyre, the first practice to achieve two consecutive wins of both the Libetkin Prize and the Stirling Prize, will design the new centre, which should be finished by September 2021.

Sir James called engineering and science "the most fulfilling of careers" which were vitally important to our society and economy.



*Sir James Dyson, centre, with Gresham's chair of governors Michael Gaff, left, and headmaster Douglas Robb. Sir James has donated £18.75 million to Gresham's in Holt, Norfolk, to pay for new centre for science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) education. Picture: Gresham's*

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He said: "To prime a pipeline of young people who want to study engineering, we must inspire them at the earliest possible stage - I hope this building will do just that."

"For 20 years, my foundation has supported science and engineering education.

"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.

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"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.

"By creating state-of-the-art spaces I hope that we can foster, inspire and educate more brilliant young minds.

"I am so pleased Gresham's will be leading the charge."

The Dyson centre will enable new approaches to teaching, encouraging project work and collaboration.



*Douglas Robb, Gresham's School headmaster, said he was delighted with Sir James Dyson's donation, which will have an "immense impact" on the future of education at the school. Picture: Supplied by Hannah Coetsee.*

Spaces will be equipped with the latest technology to enable the highest levels of teaching in areas such as robotics, programming, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning.

The centre will also bolster an outreach programme Gresham's runs with other local schools.

Sir James was born Cromer and joined Gresham's aged nine, attending the school from 1956 to 1965.

He has always acknowledged the school and its then headmaster, Logie Bruce-Lockhart, for giving him the financial support to continue his education after his father, Alec, died of cancer.

Alec Dyson was head of the school's classics department, and his mother, Mary, also taught at the school.

Sir James said of his father: "When he returned from fighting with the 14th Army in Burma during the war, he threw himself into the life of the school, producing plays, taking games, the CCF [Combined Cadet Force] and the sailing club.

"When he was ill, he carried on teaching but died when I was nine.

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

"I am hugely grateful to Gresham's for the enlightening and inspiring education that I enjoyed so much."

Thanks to his stellar success as inventor and entrepreneur, Sir James has donated more than £100m to engineering education.

Sir James Dyson and family came in at No.5 on this year's Sunday Times rich list, with an estimated worth of £12.6bn.

Gresham's, a day and boarding school for pupils aged two to 18, is one of the top 30 International Baccalaureate schools in England.