

Hopes education facility can be the envy of rest of the country

By David Humphreys

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THE BOSS of a multi-million pound educational facility wants to make it the best of its kind in the country after a successful first academic year.

Reflecting on a first full term at the helm of the £14.6 million Deeside Sixth site in Connah's Quay, Alex Thomas said he wants to make Deeside "an educational hub" for years to come.

The ambitions don't stop there for the former Connah's Quay High School student, who said he wants to make Deeside Sixth the best A-level provider in the country.

The post-16 education facility jointly developed by Coleg Cambria, Connah's Quay High School and Flintshire Council has been described as the college's biggest project ever

and opened for the first time in September 2016.

Work on the three-storey building began in March 2015 and includes specialist performing arts, music, science and creative arts facilities as well as general teaching classrooms and social and private study spaces.

Mr Thomas, who was raised and studied in Connah's Quay and taught in the town, said he was really pleased with how things had turned out for the sixth form location's first year in operation.

He said: "It has been a really positive first year.

"I was keen to instil a positive educational ethos from day one and the students have working as hard as they can.

"We want to continue to grow as we move forward."

The hub centralises much of the county's post-16 education provision, with sixth-forms at Holywell High



There has been a really positive first year here

School, Connah's Quay High School, John Summers High School in Queensferry and Elfed High School in Buckley discontinued.

Mr Thomas praised the effort of students who had transferred from John Summers following the lengthy but unsuccessful battle to keep the school open.

He said: "We had a number come from there and they were very successful. They were a real tribute to the school and were strong and really positive in themselves and the other pupils.

"It has been good for them to come



■ Alex Thomas, head of Deeside Sixth.

from the school to a new, positive environment."

Including Deeside Sixth, Coleg Cambria celebrated its best ever A-level performance when results were released earlier this month.

Mr Thomas added that preparation had been in place for success and there are only plans to build on that further.

"We expected to have good results and we've found where we want to improve," he said.

"We want to be the best A-level provider in the country and continue to send students to prestigious locations. It's a good strong starting block to have."

Hundreds of new students will sample the impressive multi-million pound structure after receiving their GCSE results last week.

Mr Thomas said they could not be moving into a better place to further their academic development.

"There have been no teething problems with the building, the builders did a great job and we've had fantastic support from all the staff," he said.

"There haven't been any real difficulties, it has been a very successful year and we've got our student plan in place for working over the next few years.

"I think it's a really, really good thing for Deeside.

"I'm a local lad and it's great to see the development of students coming through the fantastic facilities we've got. We want to make Deeside an educational hub and for people to want to come to study here over the next few years.

"It's only going to grow and it will help boost growth in the Deeside area. We want to reverse that trend of graduates leaving Wales to work and keep people staying in the area to work here."