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Henlow Academy goes interactive with Avocor

Henlow Academy in Bedfordshire caters for over 700 pupils in years 5 to 9 and is a key part in the county's 'Schools for the Future' plan. The school is within the first cluster that are changing from a middle to a secondary school as the region transitions from a three to a two tier education system. As part of this development, the school is currently undergoing a major newbuild and refurbishment programme overseen by PCMS Design, an architectural and project management practice based in Buckinghamshire.

The latest phase of work at the Academy includes the construction of a two storey extension to the existing sports hall and classroom block. The extension also incorporates four science labs, five classrooms and a lift. The corridors are wide and there are views of the courtyard which create light and space and bring out the brightly coloured walls. All classrooms and specialist teaching rooms are designed to Department for Education Building Bulletin 103, and alongside the eye-catching exterior and interior design, the extension also includes E series interactive displays from Avocor, a global leader in collaboration solutions.

As the lead designer of the site development project PCMS Design specified the installation of fixtures and fittings in each of the new classrooms. Alex Bond, Director, commented on some of the design thinking behind the project: "the room shape and location of the classroom door in relation to the teaching wall are paramount in the learning space design process - and are the first things to be considered. This is so the orientation of the room is planned out to optimum effect for the teacher, who will need to see the door easily from the front of the classroom. We would never design a classroom with windows directly opposite the teaching wall in case of glare on the display screen."

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He continued: “We ensure is that the room lighting is carefully designed, and is arranged in banks for maximum performance and aesthetic effect. For instance, a typical classroom at Henlow has three banks with three LED light fixtures in each bank. The teacher can then independently turn off the three lights closest to the teaching wall when required further reducing glare, so that the Avocor interactive display is more easily viewed by the students. In fact, throughout the project we found the Avocor customer support and installation to be of a high quality, and would certainly recommend the company to other customers in the future.”

Karen Evans, Henlow Academy Operations Manager, added: “Our Academy has hugely benefitted from the Avocor Interactive displays, which PCMS Design specified in all the new build and refurbished areas of the Academy. We are now putting them through their paces, and I am impressed by the flexibility and ease of use they offer to both staff and pupils. They’re a great aid to our teaching environment.”

There are Avocor E series displays installed throughout the new extension. The E series interactive displays utilize the very latest optimized touch technology and superior glass technology providing a smooth and extremely accurate, low latency writing experience and object recognition. The ability to easily switch between using a pen, finger, and palm creates a fluid collaborative environment for users in real-time. In the specialist teaching areas such as the science labs and tech rooms, there are 86” screens in the specialist teaching areas, 75” screens in general teaching classrooms, and 55” in the group rooms.