

ADA. NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR DIGITAL SKILLS

PROGRESS REPORT

NOVEMBER 2020



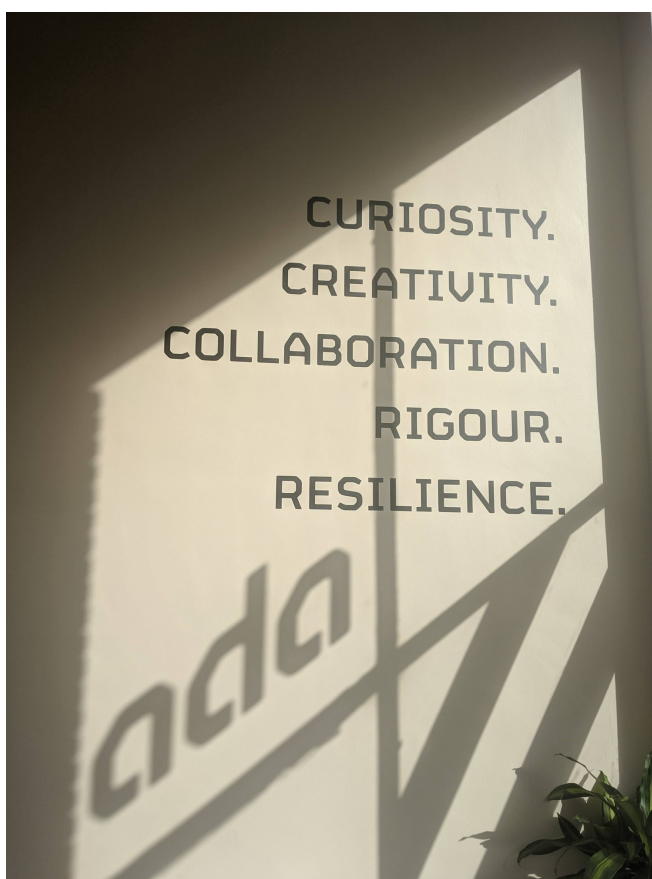
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“Ada is a great example of our approach to FE Reform, bringing together education and training expertise with strong relationships with major employers – in their case Google, Deloitte and Bank of America, EY, Salesforce – to ensure the FE offer for young people and mature learners will lead to great careers.”

-Gillian Keegan, Apprenticeships and Skills Minister, September 2020

Read more about our visit from the minister on page 8.



2020 has been a year to remember. With a global pandemic altering almost every aspect of our daily lives, to the difficult and long-overdue conversations around social injustice, we are so very proud of all of our learners and staff for continuing to be beacons of Ada's core values in the face of such challenges and emotional upheaval. It was through embracing Ada's values of resilience, rigour, curiosity, creativity, and collaboration which allowed our learners and staff to continue learning remotely; our sixth formers then graduating with some of the best computer science grades in the country, and our first ever cohort of degree apprentices graduate into fulfilling careers.

"At Ada, it's our shared values of creativity, curiosity, collaboration, rigour and resilience that will be the foundation of how we will be our best selves and get through in this time of global crisis."

- Tina Götschi, Principal

REMOTE LEARNING



Ada has led the way in remote teaching since the COVID-19 crisis, and we're proud to have been able to continue our education in a meaningful way. As thought-leaders in digital education, the spotlight has been on Ada to show how remote learning can be impactful and continue to help young people progress on their path to success. Choosing to close our physical doors the week before

the official National Lockdown began, Ada has led the way in remote teaching, and we're proud to have been able to continue our education in a meaningful way. As thought-leaders in digital education, the spotlight has been on Ada to show how remote learning can be impactful and continue to help young people progress on their path to success. Our swift response to the crisis, and tech-savvy staff, meant that lessons, lectures, and even volunteer-led events, continued uninterrupted. Feedback from our students and apprentices has been overwhelmingly positive, and our success has garnered media attention with Ada's students and staff being interviewed by The Telegraph and BBC News and we have been visited by Minister of State Gillian Keegan (more on that later).

"Official exams are cancelled and there was certainly the option for Ada to leave the students (and parents) to their own devices - literally...So, I really appreciate that they run classes, set activities and continue to be the great influence in my son's life that they have been for the past two years. The fact he still connects with other students and talks about something beyond computer games, coronavirus, and how annoying his siblings are, is invaluable. I can't motivate, engage or entertain a teenager for six weeks, let alone four months! I need Ada to keep his mind active and his spirits high. So, to the entire Ada team: thank you!"

- Jude Williams; Ada Parent

91%

Sixth Formers said they received help and feedback whilst learning from home in Lockdown

"The Lockdown in March meant as teachers, we had to think creatively about ways to keep our students engaged while we all worked remotely. Our usual jovial face-to-face lessons had to take a different approach, but this didn't phase our students who very quickly adapted to the new lessons."

- Natasha Reynolds, Head of Creative Studies



SIXTH FORM

This summer we said a fond farewell to our Year 13s and Class of 2020. It's been an interesting year for our graduates to say the least; navigating their studies from home and in the shadow of a global pandemic is not what anyone would call plain sailing, but our Class of 2020 showed their resilience; continuing to attend virtual lessons, taking part in industry-led sessions, and supporting one



another up to the finish line. To mark the occasion, Ada hosted a virtual graduation, attended by students, staff, parents, and even some of our industry partners, all of whom have been a huge part of our graduates' successes.

"Today marks an important milestone in your life and given we find ourselves in the middle of a pandemic and a world crying out for social justice, I am quite certain you will always remember 2020...Today is a great achievement and comes at the end of lots of hard work on behalf of you and your teachers. Throughout your time at Ada you have been preparing for this day: the day you start the next part of your journey."

- Frances Light, Global Director Diversity and Inclusion at King Games,
Ada's Virtual Graduation Ceremony 2020

RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS

Of our 2020 graduates, 25% achieved A-level results at A* or A, 100% passed their externally assessed Computing BTEC with 65% achieving the top Distinction*/Distinction grades.

Ada's Class of 2020 performed exceptionally well on results day, especially in the wake of the disruption caused to exams by COVID-19. Of our 2020 graduates, 25% achieved A-level results at A* or A, 100% passed their externally assessed Computing BTEC with 65% achieving the top Distinction*/Distinction grades. This makes us the best educational institution in the country for this qualification (by

some margin!) with Ada students achieving an average of a grade higher per unit in their BTEC than the national average.

Progression opportunities include everything from truly aspirational degree level apprenticeships at blue chip companies such as Deloitte, Fujitsu, and Goldman Sachs, to places at Russell Group universities (including our first Oxford student) and full-time roles as junior developers. Over 90% of our female students have gone on to their first choice destination, with more girls than ever before opting to study on apprenticeships with top tech companies.

PROGRESSION STATS

Of our 2020 graduates,
67% went on to University,
20% into Degree
Apprenticeships and 10%
began fulfilling careers

DELOITTE VIRTUAL HACKATHON

Ada's Sixth Form wrapped up their summer term by working with Deloitte on an AI Hackathon. Our first ever virtual industry project, Year 12 students worked with experts from Deloitte, to create an application using AI to improve college life. The winning team created 'Overwrite', an AI tool for professionalising emails.



Rares, Ada's first Oxford student, and Yaseen and Vivian who are both going onto fantastic apprenticeships.

"Every industry project I've been a part of I've learnt so much. The feedback for me is the best, whether it's good or bad, I always end up using that feedback in all the work I do."

- Ada Student

ANDREA RODRIGUES: NATIONAL COMPUTING LEARNER OF THE YEAR

This summer, Andrea Rodrigues, from Ada's class of 2020, was unveiled as the National Computing Learner of the Year by exams body, Pearson. In a virtual ceremony, Andrea was recognised for her curiosity, determination, and hard work. She was singled out for her contribution to helping school children learn to code, recognised by the judges and also by the Royal Institution, for whom she helped develop and deliver the first of a national set of primary computing master classes. Andrea has progressed onto a top digital apprenticeship with Fujitsu.



Andrea Rodrigues speaking at our Ada Lovelace Day ceremony, 2019

TINA GÖTSCHI: ADA'S NEW PRINCIPAL

This new academic year, we welcomed Tina Götschi as our new Principal. After joining Ada back in 2017, Tina helped us design our computer science curriculum before becoming Vice Principal. A familiar face to many of our students, we're so excited to have Tina leading our Sixth Form, bringing her industry experience, collaborative leadership and creativity to the helm.



Tina Götschi, Principal

2020 intake

This September, Ada welcomed 93 new students: our largest ever cohort of year 12s (representing 40% year-on-year growth from 2019) and, with 55% of them from low-income backgrounds and 48% from racially diverse backgrounds, as well as double the number of female students from our 2019 intake, we are proud to be making a positive impact on our social mission.

SPOTLIGHT ON: MINISTER KEEGAN VISIT

In September, Apprenticeships Minister Gillian Keegan, visited Ada to talk to students about kick-starting their careers in STEM. Minister Keegan affirmed the value and benefits of apprenticeship programmes, telling her own story of seeking out apprenticeships that allowed her to study to a high level while she worked. Minister Keegan also acknowledged

that finding these opportunities is not easy, nor is it always a fast process, but encouraged students to, "just never give up, and never stop learning." She highlighted the importance of studying subjects where there are current skills gaps and qualified students will be in-demand by employers.



Minister Keegan (second from left) visits Ada, September 2020

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Ada stands in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.

We have a lot of listening, learning and growing to do to ensure we stand up and show up for all of our students and staff, all of the time. Fighting systematic racism, not only in the tech sector and education but in all aspects of society, requires ongoing action and reflection in every classroom, lecture hall, and board room. We have been asking ourselves uncomfortable questions to figure out how we can best support the Black Lives Matter movement and fight racism. This September Ada launched our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee which will be working with learners and staff to ensure:

- Everyone feels accepted for who they are at Ada
- We create a safe and supportive environment for people to call-out unacceptable attitudes, comments, or behaviours
- That we examine what we can do to influence the world outside of Ada

We know that this will be an ongoing journey and we are committed to ensuring that we embed equity, diversity and inclusion at the very core of Ada.



APPRENTICESHIPS

In the wake of the pandemic, our Apprenticeship team swiftly and effectively moved to full remote delivery, equating to 31 weeks of intense remote learning on everything from Ethics to Network security. We have been so proud of all the staff and learners who adapted so quickly to the change, showing true resilience and collaboration to ensure learning continued as uninterrupted as possible.



This year has also seen us reach a very important milestone: with our first students completing their degree apprenticeships after joining us back in 2017. Three years of hard work and perseverance, which was topped off by six months of lockdown learning, saw our 50 apprentices leave Ada employed and looking forward to their new careers with a full degree under their belt. We couldn't be prouder!

NEW APPRENTICESHIP COHORT



November 2020 sees the intake of Ada's 7th cohort of apprentices. With 48% female, 52% from racially diverse backgrounds, and 56% from low income backgrounds, this is our most diverse apprenticeship cohort yet. Additionally, 66% of our apprentices are progressing from the 2 year Foundation degree to the 3 year BSc degree course.

Our November launchpad will also be the first time we've onboarded apprentices entirely remotely. Having previously focused on face-to-face team activities during our launchpads, our teaching team are channelling their Ada value of creativity to ensure that we can still bring all the enthusiasm and interaction of our regular launchpads via a new medium.

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STEVEN PATRICK: SHORTLISTED FOR APPRENTICESHIP OF THE YEAR AWARD

A huge congratulations to one of our Deloitte Apprentices, Steven Patrick, for being shortlisted for The Judge's Choice Award at this year's BAME Apprenticeship Awards in association with Pearson, in recognition of his hard work and dedication throughout his apprenticeship with Deloitte.



"I think this is one of the most important years where diversity should be celebrated and I'm so happy to have been shortlisted as a finalist."

- Steven Patrick, Ada Apprentice



INTRODUCING: ADA MANCHESTER



We have laid the foundations for a new type of education institution that will grow substantially in the coming years in London and nationwide. With support from Manchester City Council and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, along with key industry figures and employers, Ada will be delivering digital skills courses and degree apprenticeships from our base in Manchester city centre. Our first cohort of apprentices in the region will

start their training in February 2021 with Sykes Cottages, Call Sign, HP Enterprises and AO.com. We officially launched Ada Manchester on Ada Lovelace Day, with the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, attending our virtual ribbon cutting ceremony.

"In this growing digital economy we now have a national digital skills provider that is able to equip the coming generation in Manchester with what they need to find their place in that £5 billion digital economy."

- Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham.



Ada Manchester kicked off this November with the launch of our first pilot programmes in collaboration with The Prince's Trust. Ada Manchester is delivering a one-day Digital Skills and Careers Festival packed with encouragement, practical insights, and advice from industry partners on how to pursue a career in tech. We've also been delivering week-long short courses for diverse groups of young people that provide them with a brilliant opportunity to take their first steps towards a digital career, learn some essential tech skills, and develop their own confidence and personal effectiveness. As with the one-day festival, participants gain insights and inspiration from volunteers from our industry partners such as AO and Arup.



"Understanding how tech teams work together and the importance of communicating and collaborating was very good rather than simply focusing on coding."
- Ada Careers Festival Participant

IN SUMMARY

2020 was an interesting year to say the least. Despite the global challenges we have all faced, our staff and learners came together and, through their resilience and collaboration, helped Ada continue to provide a meaningful digital education. We will be ending the year having transformed the lives of our sixth form and apprenticeship Class of 2020 graduates; helping them onto the right path and into a fulfilling future. Now we are looking towards 2021 excited for the opportunities it will bring and the chance to help more young people into a successful future in the tech sector.

WITH THANKS TO ADA'S SUPPORTERS

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Ada Lovelace illustrations by Ada students, Indigo, Bhavya, Janet and Anisa

