

# Carriages will help pupils with their 'train' of thought...

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School children at Waltham Abbey have their own Hogwarts Express – after RSS delivered a couple of railway carriages being donated by Porterbrook.

They will play an integral part at Upshire Primary Foundation School; one carriage will become a library and another a classroom.

Like Harry's famous train, these carriages once regularly made the trip from London King's Cross, trundling through rolling hills up to Edinburgh. Perhaps unlike the boy wizards steam-powered magical ride however, these are much more modern ex-East Coast Mk III carriages.

RSS delivered the carriages in a delicate operation along the roads from Long Marston in Warwickshire to the school where they were installed on specially-prepared plinths – with short sections of track on which to rest the bogies.

Andrew Goodman, managing director of RSS explained that the final stage of the journey and installation of the now-redundant rail coaches, each 23m (75ft 6in) long and weighing over 33 tonnes, "had its

challenges.”

He said: “Moving loads of this length is straightforward enough on motorways and main roads, but manoeuvring them through suburban streets with width and weight restrictions needs a lot of planning. No-one ever expected loads of this size to be delivered to a school!

“Some road signs, a fence and a gate had to be removed before we could reach the site. To make sure that the delivery would be trouble-free on the day, in advance we completed a ‘dry run’ with an empty transporter.”

To limit damage to the grassed areas of the school grounds, RSS installed special protective matting. The coaches were then offloaded firstly on to temporary track before being traversed sideways into position, using ‘MFD’ hydraulic lifting gear. The concrete plinths on which the vehicles now rest were specially installed to overcome problems with the soft ground at this location.

Andrew added: “It’s good to see the coaches being put to such an imaginative educational use. One is to become a library and the other an unusual classroom and the school expects to take about six months to convert them to their new use.”

The vehicles will also be made available for use by the local community.

RSS provided the transport and installation ‘at cost’. Andrew Goodman added: “This was a collaborative effort between a number of organisations to ensure the vehicles arrived safely. It has been such a worthwhile project.”