

HS2 contractor takes pupils back to Triassic times

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Balfour Beatty has presented pupils with a sample of rock which serves as a souvenir from the age of dinosaurs.

The contractors, working on behalf of **HS2** in the area, gave youngsters at Newall Green Primary School in Manchester a history lesson on the rock sample, which dates back 240 million years.

The 1.5-metre-long sample was extracted from 58 metres beneath the school's playing field. It was uncovered as part of HS2's preliminary ground investigation works. Analysis of rock samples enables HS2's team of specialist engineers to better understand ground conditions ahead of finalising designs for the construction of Britain's new railway, which will extend from Crewe to Manchester.

Balfour Beatty's senior materials engineer, Philip Dumelow, told pupils from years five and six how analysis of the sample showed that the school's site would have once sat at the bottom of a shallow sea or lake. And much to the pupils' delight, he confirmed that there would have been dinosaurs at that time – though they were only just starting to emerge.

Leonie Dubois, HS2's head of consultation and engagement, said: "HS2's unprecedented archaeology programme along the Birmingham to London section of the railway has led to the most extraordinary finds, and it's exciting that we're now beginning to discover more about Britain's past along the Manchester

section of the HS2 route.

“We hope this session has helped to inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers who will support major infrastructure projects of the future.”

The rock sample and a framed copy of the accompanying borehole log, which provides a geotechnical description of the sample, were presented to headteacher Mrs Rudd and will now go on display in the school. Balfour Beatty’s team of engineers also prepared information for the students highlighting how the school’s site evolved from the Triassic Period through the Ice Ages to the present day.

Philip Dumelow, Balfour Beatty senior materials engineer, said: “It was a privilege to share this slice of local history with the pupils at Newall Green, and I hope it helped to show just how exciting a career in engineering can be.”

Mrs Rudd, headteacher at Newall Green Primary said: “It’s fascinating that this rock sample can tell us so much about the site where Newall Green Primary sits today.

“The children were captivated by Philip’s talk as he really brought the past to life, which appealed to their inquisitive nature. He has challenged them to become the engineers of the future and continue with their discoveries of life on earth millions of years ago.”