

Initiative to inspire pupils to consider a career in rail a “great success”

January 11, 2022



A pilot programme to inspire young people to consider a career in rail has been hailed as a great success.

Network Rail and The Talent Foundry worked with four schools and 80 pupils on the Track to the Future initiative.

The schools were the Lord Grey Academy (Bletchley), The Adeyfield Academy (Hemel Hempstead), King Edwards VI Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy (Birmingham), and Harborne Academy (Birmingham).

The aim was to provide pupils with a unique insight into the day-to-day workings of Network Rail, profiling both the project management and the technological side of the industry in the process.

Mentors from Network Rail supported students through four sessions which they designed to be both highly interactive and engaging. Overall, 21 Network Rail staff members donated 116 hours of volunteering to support the sessions.



Lord Grey Academy pupils

As part of the programme, students were able to develop key transferable skills in innovation and creativity whilst also learning about crucial industry competencies such as accountability, collaboration, and responding to challenging situations. Where possible, students had two of their sessions at Network Rail's Quadrant office in Milton Keynes or Baskerville House in Birmingham to gain a unique insight into the workplace in action.

Lydia Fairman, lead capability and development manager from Network Rail, said: "We think the pilot Track to the Future Programme was a great success, and it was brilliant to receive such positive feedback from those who took part. The volunteers who worked on the programme were really excited to share their expertise and passion for the sector with the participating students."

The Talent Foundry is an independent education charity. Its mission is to increase social mobility by helping young people from disadvantaged backgrounds discover their aptitudes, develop valuable new employment skills and take the first step into the world of work.

Cate Smith, head of programmes at The Talent Foundry, said: "Everyone at The Talent Foundry was delighted to work with Network Rail on the pilot Track to the Future programme. We know Network Rail are as passionate as we are about ensuring disadvantaged young people can access a range of opportunities to get them thinking about their future. I hope this programme inspired lots of students to consider a career in the rail sector."