

# Rail Forum Midlands Leads Collaborative Approach for Primary Engineer's Rail Project for schools

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Primary Engineer® has announced that Rail Forum Midlands working in collaboration with industry and government has become a funding partner for the Primary Engineer Rail Project providing 12 primary schools in the East Midlands area the opportunity to engage with inspiring STEM projects.

Acting as the lynchpin, Rail Forum Midlands has brought together funding from the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), Hitachi Rail and Porterbrook to bring the Primary Engineer Rail Project to schools in the region. Further companies will be involved providing volunteers to support the delivery of the projects in schools. The collaboration will see engineering professionals from a wide range of backgrounds and specialities working alongside pupils and teachers. A one-day, practical CPD course for teachers will provide them with the know-how and kit to deliver the whole-class, rail-orientated engineering projects with engineering professionals providing a real-life context to the project.

Business Minister Lord Callanan said: "I am enormously proud to support the Primary Engineer programme which, along with Rail Forum Midlands and industry partners, will help to educate and inspire the next

generation of engineers. This scheme is hugely ambitious, helping school children across the East Midlands, one of the rail industry's traditional heartlands, to ignite their interest in the fundamentals of engineering for years to come."

Elaine Clark, CEO Rail Forum Midlands, said: "We have supported education outreach into secondary schools for many years and have long held the aspiration to get more involved with younger aged pupils. Thanks to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy who have acted as a catalyst to pull key companies together we are delighted to now be able to deliver the Primary Engineer Rail project across the East Midlands. We plan to build on this initial start adding more schools across the wider region in the coming years."

Pete Fletcher, Emerging Talent Specialist, Hitachi Rail said: "We are incredibly proud to increase our support of the Primary Engineer scheme to encourage more young people to think about careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). This work helps us to inspire the next generation into a career in rail to further encourage diversity of people and ideas in our industry."

Rupert Brennan Brown, Director of Stakeholder Engagement at Porterbrook and a Rail Forum Midlands Board Member, said: "Porterbrook is committed to encouraging and supporting the next generation of railway engineers. As our industry responds to the decarbonisation and Net Zero challenges set by government, we need enthusiastic and passionate young people who can help build the railway of tomorrow. We are proud to work with RFM, BEIS and Hitachi on the delivery of The Primary Engineer Rail Project which aims to connect the railway with primary schools across the East Midlands."

Chris Rochester, UK Director at Primary Engineer, said: "Having this opportunity to work with a group of fantastic rail organisations to bring the Primary Engineer Rail Project to even more pupils and teachers in this part of the country is superb. Early engagement is really important so that all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity or background can develop a passion for engineering and aspire to a future career in the rail sector."

With a passion for STEM, Rail Forum Midlands' engagement with Primary Engineer builds on their existing iRail programme for secondary pupils by providing opportunities for primary pupils to begin to understand what engineering is, that engineering is open to everyone and to explore engineering within the context of rail.

*Photo credit: Rail Forum Midlands*