Siemens Mobility helps drive up fundraising for new school minibus

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Siemens Mobility in Goole has stepped in to help a local school's fundraising to buy a specially adapted minibus.

Riverside School is attended by children and young people aged from two to 19 who have complex high needs and profound learning difficulties.

It launched a fundraising campaign earlier this year for a new minibus with electric wheelchair access to take classes on off-site enrichment trips to leisure centres, museums, galleries and other attractions.

The school, on Ainsty Street, needs a total of £47,000 for the 17-seater vehicle. It currently has to hire a minibus with the required specifications every time staff want to take pupils that require a wheelchair on a trip.

Siemens Mobility, which is developing a pioneering rail facility in Goole, has now donated £3,000 to the cause, bringing the current fundraising total to £38,000.

It has been supporting Riverside and 12 other schools through the Primary Engineer programme, which is designed to ignite interest and curiosity in exciting careers in engineering among local children from a young age.

Designated STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Ambassadors from Siemens Mobility have supported hundreds of pupils with rail-themed engineering projects and concepts such as design, problem-solving and testing and evaluation.

Pete Parker, director of asset management and assurance at Siemens Mobility in Goole, has been the STEM Ambassador for Riverside and heard about the fundraising appeal for the new minibus. After making his own personal donation, he raised the appeal with the company, which agreed to donate £3,000.

He said: "Riverside is a wonderful school and the staff there go above and beyond to give the pupils there the best possible opportunities they can, including taking them out on enrichment trips.

"It's so important that the less advantaged people in society don't get forgotten about and Siemens Mobility was more than happy to come forward with this contribution.

"I'd like to think we could see some of the pupils from Riverside working at our factory in Goole at some point in the future."

Andy Hall, headteacher at the 136-pupil school, said: "This donation from Siemens Mobility is absolutely brilliant and we're incredibly grateful, as we've been to everyone who's supported our fundraising efforts.

"The enrichment trips we take our pupils on make a massive difference to them and we're now well on our way to reaching our target."

Anne Handley, Goole Town councillor and deputy leader of East Riding of Yorkshire Council, attended the official cheque presentation at the school.

She said: "I'm delighted that Siemens Mobility are yet again supporting the local community with this fantastic donation towards the Riverside School minibus appeal.

"Their support for Goole has been second to none and they've become an incredible asset to the town."

Siemens Mobility is investing up to £200 million in the rail facility at Goole, which will create around 700 direct jobs, with a further 250 roles during the construction phase and an additional 1,700 indirect supply chain opportunities.

The factory is scheduled to open in 2023 when it will begin manufacturing state-of-the-art Tube trains for the Piccadilly line on the London Underground.

Brigg and Goole MP Andrew Percy said: "When Siemens invested in Goole, they always made it clear they didn't just want to build their factory, but they wanted to contribute positively to the social fabric and broader community.

"They have done this in spades by supporting various projects and this is yet another example of their contribution to the town, and one which is going to a very worthy cause."

Siemens Mobility recently donated an outdoor facility to nearby Airmyn Park Primary School for use as a unique new learning space.

It has also supported the local community by jointly funding enhancements to Oakhill Nature Reserve, in Goole, and contributing towards the town's Two Rivers Community Pantry food bank.