

# News

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## **Morgan Sindall hosts Interschool construction challenge to design new rides for Pleasurewood Hills**

Helping inspire pupils to channel their creativity, whilst driving core science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects is a core part of our student outreach and inspiration programme.

The latest Construction Skills Network Insight from the CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) states that over 35,000 new recruits will be needed annually to 2021 to match the expected industry growth – let alone fill the skill gaps we already have.

Persuading the next generation that construction is an exciting and diverse industry in which to forge a career is the responsibility of everyone in the sector. As part of our commitment to this, we are proud to attend school events and assemblies to talk about the range of careers on offer. In addition, we are also entering strategic partnerships with other industries to develop new and engaging events.

Teaming up with Pleasurewood Hills, Nexus Engineering Centre, East Norfolk Sixth Form College and East Coast College, we crafted a challenge for local secondary school students that would not only tap into their STEM subjects, but challenge their artistry too.

65 pupils from five Norfolk and Suffolk schools were invited to take part in an Interschool Construction Challenge at the Nexus Engineering Centre in Great Yarmouth. Working in teams of five, students were tasked with designing, building, testing and marketing an innovative new bridge system that would transport Pleasurewood Hills thrill seekers across the theme park's large lake.

Students spent the morning measuring a scale model of the lake, drafting designs for their transport system and creating marketing literature to publicise the new attraction.

With all their plans in place, students spent the next two hours constructing their unique inventions, using the boxes of LEGO bricks, motors and contraptions of all shapes and sizes that were available.

The day culminated with each ride being tested on the scale model of the lake, judged by the Pleasurewood Hills park manager, Adam Noble, and Morgan Sindall's community investment advisor, Helen Clements.

Helen said: "The Interschool Construction Challenge has been a great partnership to engage local students. Creating new and exciting events in our outreach programme has been vital in continuing to inspire pupils into our industry.

"The level of ingenuity used in the designs has been amazing. The next step for us is to re-engage these pupils and see how we can engineer a selection of work experience sessions or project placements so that they can get an even better taste of our industry."

Bob Beard, centre manager of Nexus Engineering Centre said: "It was a pleasure to host this event, and see so many students from local schools and colleges developing their STEM skills, particularly in relation to construction."

In 2017, our business unit in the east of England engaged with almost 10,000 students at STEM events like this one, as well as securing 186 work experience days, delivering 748 apprentice weeks and creating 34 new jobs. With the aim to exceed in all of these areas, 2018 is off to a great start.