

PRESS RELEASE



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COLLEGE HOSTS YOUNG ENGINEERS COUNTY FINALS

On Saturday 20th June 2009, Yeovil College played host to the Dorset county final of the Junior Engineers for Britain Bloodhound SSC K'Nex Challenge 2009.

Thirty-four school children aged between five and 11 came to the College to take part in the annual competition, which aims to introduce younger people to the world of engineering and technology in a fun and interesting way.

This year's two challenges were linked to the Bloodhound SSC attempt to beat the current land speed record. Three teams of two pupils from Sticklands Primary School, Stalbridge Primary School and Salway Ash Primary School took part in the Level 1 (five to eight year olds') challenge to design an aerodynamic buggy capable of travelling in a straight line as far as possible when launched down a ramp.

Pupils from nine schools took part in the Level 2 (nine to 11 year olds') challenge to design an aeroplane capable of carrying the Bloodhound SSC car and flying it and its crew safely around the world. They represented Dorset schools including Puddletown First School, Milborne St. Andrew First School, Dorchester Middle School, Broadmayne First School, Frome Valley First School, Sticklands Primary School, Stalbridge Primary School, St Mary's Middle School and Piddle Valley First School.

The young learners had to draw a design of their buggy or aeroplane before building it from K'Nex. The four judges, Yeovil College Head of Engineering Andy Davidson, AimHigher's Brian Duke, professional mechanical design engineer Mario Martins and Yeovil College Engineering lecturer Lloyd Anderson, inspected each design before giving it points.

There were four Level 2 winners. **The Rockets** (Lewis Wortley and Harry Buttle of Dorchester Middle School), **the Ratty Toads** (Henry Straughan and Billy Browning of Sticklands Primary School), **Stalbridge Oasis** (Dylan Stockley and Ryan Andrews of Stalbridge Primary School) and **A Few Bolts Loose** (Tom Cordery and Tom Foyle of St Mary's Middle School) will compete later this month at the regional final at Bath University. All of the teams received prizes for taking part.

Judge Lloyd Anderson said *"Thank-you to you all for participating and to the parents for letting you take part! It's been nice to see the children build their confidence up today. Some of them were very nervous at first, but they were very positive and enjoyed what they were doing. Many of them had some great original thoughts and ideas, which they have put into their designs."*

It was the first time fellow judge Mario Martins, a STEMNET Ambassador and employee of Poole engineering company aeroform ltd, had been involved in a K'Nex Challenge event. He said *"Today has been very interesting. Being involved with the kids is fantastic and hopefully this experience will be a positive influence on their futures. Both the children and the judges enjoyed today and talking with the kids about their designs was brilliant. I definitely want to be involved in future events."*

The event was organised by STEMNET, a government organisation dedicated to encouraging young people to have a positive attitude towards Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). AimHigher supported the competition and STEM Ambassadors Mark Dunkerley of Bath University and Vicky Humble of Honiton Community College were also on hand throughout the morning.

Georgina Humble organised the event on behalf of STEMNET. She said *"Today has gone really well. All the school children have worked really hard and the judges were really pleased with their work. It was great to see so many parents and brothers and sisters here to support them too. Modern life is so reliant on developments in science, technology, engineering and maths, it's important that young people have plenty of opportunities to learn about them and explore their own ideas. Who knows what they may come up with if they choose a STEM-based career!"*

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Notes to Editors

All press enquiries to Eileen Furze, Marketing Officer t: (01935) 845428 e: eileen.furze@yeovil.ac.uk
www.yeovil.ac.uk