

News story: Four awards in one week for Direct Rail Services

The Class 88 locomotive was described as a potential 'game-changer' in terms of electric freight train operation.

The Class 88, built by Stadler, is an electric locomotive that also boasts a powerful 750kW Caterpillar diesel engine which provides unrivalled flexibility allowing it to run on electrified and non-electrified parts of the rail network.

DRS, subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, is using single Class 88 locomotives on its intermodal freight services which run daily between Daventry and Mossend.

Class 88s have also been used to operate DRS's nuclear flask services nationwide, using electric power on the West and East Coast Mainlines and diesel power for long stretches of track that aren't electrified.

The judges felt that the Class 88 has provided an excellent solution to efficient freight train operation into rail terminals. The ability to use metered electric power where available has also achieved considerable fuel cost savings.

Golborne Jn 2017 8 26 88005 0640 Daventry – Mossend Euroterminal David Clough

This latest success comes hot on the heels of the Rail Freight Group Awards on Tuesday, where DRS received the 'Business of the Year' award. This accolade is presented to the company that the judges consider to be the overall best performing business in the rail freight sector.

Chris Connelly, Chief Operating Officer for DRS, said:

The DRS team is incredibly proud of the awards it has won over the past few days.

The recognition is testament to what can be achieved through effective teamwork together with huge support from our customers and suppliers. I would like to give my personal thanks to everyone involved as we look forward to many more exciting times ahead.

Judges said that DRS is a company that has shown excellence in several key areas this year and had "demonstrated a commitment to designing and implement exactly the right services for each customer, as well as introducing a very progressive staff development structure." This had included giving office-based staff the chance to start a new career as train drivers.

Judges added:

Managing director, Debbie Francis, is at the forefront of championing the cause of rail freight in the wider business community and the role of women within the rail industry itself. The company shows an outstanding commitment to its customers, employees and the wider community.

This was not the only award on the night, DRS worked with Eddie Stobart Limited, to introduce a seasonal train in just two weeks in October 2017 to win the Customer Care Award.

DRS was also runner up in the 'Community and Environmental Responsibility' award for their efforts with the annual charity open day, sponsorship and donations fund and volunteer work in the community.

Corporate report: Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM): 14th annual report, 2017 to 2018

This report sets out CoRWM's advice to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and to the devolved administrations from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. It also summarises the work carried out by the committee over the year.

Press release: New outreach centre launched to help boost wildlife

A landmark new outreach centre has been officially unveiled today (14 September) at Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve (NNR) in Yorkshire.

Opened by Natural England and backed by £3 million of government funding, the new outdoor laboratory facility includes an educational centre for visitors, local schools and universities helping to establish the reserve as a focal point for the local community.

Research at the site will help us understand how NNRs influence the environment way beyond their physical boundaries, boosting wildlife and providing wider benefits to society such as carbon storage and support for

rural economies.

The opening of the new research centre marks the one year anniversary of the launch of an ambitious National Nature Reserve strategy, which brings together government, wildlife charities, NGOs and private landowners to help stimulate recovery across England's native wildlife by creating conditions to enable wildlife to 'brim over' from nature reserves into the wider landscape.

Environment Minister, Thérèse Coffey said:

The transformation of the Humberhead from scarred industrial landscape to Britain's single largest restored lowland peatland is a fantastic example of how by working together to restore ecological processes we can boost wildlife, improve access to the great outdoors and create new opportunities for the local economy.

Our National Nature Reserves are seen as a role model for conservation around the world and our ambitious strategy will see them flourish, helping us deliver on our ambition to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

Over the last year the government has invested over £5 million to improve, expand and create NNRs. Natural England is committed to ensuring the future of these nationally important wildlife sites and has worked with partners to identify 80 additional priority landscapes across the country, which as they are developed, will form part of a new Nature Recovery Network of connected wildlife-rich habitats.

Representatives from the 53 conservation organisations involved in the delivery of the joint strategy, today gathered at Humberhead Peatlands NNR to reflect on the success of the programme so far.

Andy Clements, Chair of the NNR Partnership and Natural England Board member said:

The NNR Strategy builds on the solid achievements of half a century of hard work- it reinforces what we have done well, such as here on the Humber by restoring wetlands, bringing a fresh emphasis to the role of premier wildlife sites and restoring biodiversity in the wider landscapes.

This strategy forms part of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan, which sets out how we will improve the environment for future generations by creating richer habitats for wildlife, using our land more sustainably, and connecting more people with nature. Natural England, the government's advisor on the natural environment, is a key part of creating and delivering the plan.

Chief Executive of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Rob Stoneman said:

Reconnecting people with their landscape and involving them in actions, is one of the main aims of our Landscape Partnership. Through working with 13 partner organisations, to restore and enhance 200 hectares of priority habitat, rare species will be protected including; crane, marsh harrier and nightjar.

With the NNR at its core we are connecting to other wildlife rich areas, so local people and future generations will hear the enigmatic call of the bittern or the incredible sight of a marsh harrier casting a shadow overhead.

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[Press release: UK aid to connect UK schools with classrooms around the world](#)

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt joined Secretary of State for Education Damian Hinds and Love Actually director Richard Curtis to launch the Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme on Thursday 13 September 2018 at St Joseph's School in Wandsworth, London.

To mark the launch of the programme – which is co-funded by the British Council and unites pupils in the UK with school children in Africa, Asia and the Middle East – the visitors joined in the [‘World’s Largest Lesson’](#), which saw Year 6 students at St Joseph’s link up with pupils at the Marka Prep Girls’ School N2, in the Marka refugee camp in Jordan.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

The Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme is a win for the UK and a win for the developing world. Children and teachers in the participating countries are learning from each other and creating lasting friendships.

I have been really moved to hear the stories of children taking part in the programme learning how much they actually have in common, how alike they are. I also know from my travels, how much teachers in developing countries value the support and knowledge of British teachers.

The Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme has been designed to build long-term partnerships between schools and communities in the UK and countries around the world. The previous Connecting Classrooms programme involved more than 5,000 schools working in partnership and reached more than 1 million children between 2015 and 2018. DFID and British Council’s new programme builds on elements of Connecting Classrooms and the Global Learning Programme. It will increase awareness and understanding of global issues and different cultures by reaching a further 3 million pupils for a period of three years.

It will also train 60,000 teachers and school leaders in the UK and developing countries to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills to live and work in a global economy.

The Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme is part of an

initiative that introduces the UN's [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#), also known as the Global Goals, to students and teachers in the UK and around the world. The goals are designed to deliver a more sustainable future for all and include tackling hunger, providing clean water and affordable clean energy.

Secretary of State for Education Damian Hinds said:

Today was a great opportunity to see how Connecting Classrooms is making a difference in schools around the world. At St Joseph's I saw children of different faiths and backgrounds working together and learning from each other. That kind of collaboration is a lesson for us all.

It is absolutely vital that we share the very best of our education system and learn from the very best of others. Only in doing so will we get closer to forging a global understanding of what education can achieve.

Richard Curtis, a UN advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals, also added:

The Global Goals are an ambitious plan to eradicate extreme poverty, tackle the threat of climate change, and end inequality by 2030 so that future generations can live peacefully and sustainably together. It would be a wonderful thing for children to really know about them – to get them in their DNA – so they themselves can be part of the solution. This can't happen without schools and teachers getting involved because they are so important in giving children perspective on the world they live in.

It's great to see the UK taking a creative approach to involving our children in the Goals; these school partnerships will encourage children to develop real relationships with others around the world and give them an amazing opportunity to learn from each other and see how the Goals apply to everyone, home and abroad.

During yesterday's lesson students worked together to share ideas and design the world they would like to live in by the year 2030 – the deadline set for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved. The lesson ended with guests and students making personal pledges of action on what they could do to achieve the Goals.

Sir Ciarán Devane, Chief Executive, British Council, said:

Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning provides our young people with an opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to thrive in an increasingly global society.

The partnership between St Joseph's School and Marka Girls' School N2 in Jordan shows the huge impact these connections can have on pupils, teachers and the local community. We hope schools across the UK and around the world will sign up to take part.

Research has shown that 'school linking' can increase the quality of teaching and learning in the schools involved, improving both pupil engagement and teacher motivation.

Notes to editors

- The Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme will offer grants to fund visits by UK and developing country teachers to the partner school. Mobile digital platforms (such as WhatsApp and Zoom) will also be used to enable classroom-to-classroom activities between teachers and pupils.
- The scheme is jointly funded and delivered by the British Council who will contribute £17m. DFID will contribute £21m.
- The programme is for children aged between 7-14 yrs. Schools can sign up by going to the [British Council's website](#) and selecting the part of the programme they are interested in, or by emailing schools@britishcouncil.org.

It will operate in the following countries.

Region	Country
Sub Saharan Africa	Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
South Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, India
MENA	Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Yemen, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco
East Asia	Burma

What's the difference between Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning and Connecting Classrooms?

Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning builds on key elements of DFID's most recent development education programmes: the Global Learning Programme (2013-18) and Connecting Classrooms (2015-18).

From the Global Learning Programme it adopts a focus on global learning and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a wide range of UK schools; a

tailored approach to each of the four nations of the UK in order to align with their curricula; encouraging the formation of school clusters in order to achieve economies of scale and improve standards through peer learning; providing funding for supply cover so that teachers can access training; and encouraging local community action in line with the SDGs.

From Connecting Classrooms, it retains a focus on partnerships between schools in the UK and overseas, the provision of high-quality materials through the Schools Online website, advocacy and awareness raising of key educational issues overseas, and accreditation for schools through the International Schools Award (ISA). The programme will also continue to place emphasis on strong monitoring and evaluation.

In addition, Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning contains a number of new elements:

- funding for reciprocal visits, so that overseas teachers can now visit partner schools in the UK, and help bring their country to life for UK pupils providing training to teachers on running equitable and sustainable partnerships;
- the creation of a virtual partnerships platform for schools that are unable to take part in face-to-face partnerships;
- a focus on training overseas teachers to develop their pupils' skillset for the global economy e.g. entrepreneurial skills;
- encouraging partnered schools to make local progress on an SDG as a shared project;
- teacher training overseas to be aligned with DFID's 2018 education policy, with a focus on education quality and inclusion;
- accreditation for teachers and mapping other relevant awards for schools (such as UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award) to the ISA framework so that schools are duly recognised for their work on development education issues;
- in the UK, building on local community links and utilising local resources such as local NGOs, Development Education Centres, civil society organisations, higher education institutions, businesses, Regional Centres for Expertise, and encouraging Commonwealth Scholars, DFID staff, and returnees from the International Citizen Service and Voluntary Service Overseas programmes to visit local schools and discuss their experiences with pupils; and
- a focus on a smaller number of priority countries, whilst adding Lesotho, given its strong links with Wales.