

Coal Authority helps to host geological competition for students

Students aged 16 to 18 have been competing in the regional heats of the National Schools Geology Challenge.

School teams from across the East Midlands competed in 3 rounds, consisting of a presentation and poster on a theme of their choosing and a challenging geological quiz.

The Geological Society of London competition, which was incredibly closely contested, was won by Loughborough Grammar School with their work on 'Spreading the word on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge'.

The Coal Authority's Helen Bennett, from our commercial reports and advisory services team, and Leigh Sharpe, from our licensing and permissions team, hosted the evening at British Geological Survey in Keyworth, Nottingham, along with other members of the Geological Society's East Midlands group.

The judging panel – Dr Sarah Lee, from the University of Leicester, Helen Burke, from British Geological Survey and Richard Lansley, from Golder Associates – was extremely impressed with the quality and creativeness of the students' work, which included interactive experiments and 3D models.

Helen Bennett said:

The standard of work produced by the students was incredibly high, all of the schools participating had put a lot of time and effort into their entries and it was so great to see so many young people gathered together with an interest in earth sciences.

All of the schools said how much they had enjoyed the evening and a teacher told me it was a great experience for students.

We hope this event will continue to raise the profile of geology in today's society and that Coal Authority colleagues – including our ICT team, who helped ensure the night was a big success – can continue to support it in the future.

Loughborough Grammar School will now compete in the national final of the competition to be held at the Geological Society of London's impressive headquarters, Burlington House, in March 2020.

If any East Midlands schools teaching geology, geography or sciences at A level are interested in entering next year's competition, please email

HelenBennett@coal.gov.uk to find out more.

Leigh Sharpe, from the Coal Authority's licensing and permissions team, hosting one of the quiz rounds.