

News story: Dream comes true for young 'nuclear expert'

School pupil Samuel Boardman had wowed decommissioning leaders with a letter detailing how he would empty the highly-hazardous ponds.

The 11-year-old, from North Wales, came up with a proposal, using similar techniques to those already being used.

So impressed was the head of the legacy ponds, Dorothy Gradden, she offered Samuel and his family the chance of a lifetime to come and see the Sellafield site for himself.

The visit saw Mrs Gradden and Steve Cottam, head of strategy and technical for the legacy ponds, give a personalised presentation to the Boardman family.

They were also shown the Thorp viewing gallery, National Nuclear Laboratory and the underwater test facility.

Samual Boardman standing outside the Windscale Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor.

Dorothy Gradden, who was awarded an OBE last year for her services to the nuclear industry, added:

As a passionate supporter of education and training, I was hugely impressed by Samuel's detailed letter.

I value the importance of nurturing nuclear interest in youngsters, and it was a pleasure to meet Samuel so I could talk to him about his proposals and show him exactly how we are dealing with the nuclear clean-up.

It's important that the extremely challenging and complex work we already do is carried on by the next generation, so I wanted to extend the offer of a visit to Samuel, who continued to impress me with his knowledge when he came to Sellafield.

Samuel described himself as a 'nuclear physics expert' in his letter to Sellafield, and his dad Chris said:

It was a wonderful experience for Samuel and the whole family. We were amazed by complexity of the incredible work being done.

Samuel is really keen on the nuclear sector and learned an awful lot from his visit. We all did !

The effort that Sellafield put into making a little boy's dream

come true was greatly appreciated. We didn't expect anything when Samuel wrote to Sellafield, so this was an incredible experience.

Adrian Bull, MBE, director of external relations for the National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL), said:

We are always keen to encourage bright, young people to make a contribution to society by suggesting ways things could be improved – whether through the development of new technology or through the creative application of existing techniques.

Samuel has shown tremendous talent and enthusiasm through sharing his suggestions with the industry and I was delighted the he was able to visit NNL's facilities on the Sellafield site to see for himself some of the work we are doing.