

# Press release: Highways England inspires future engineers in Smethwick

Some 35 pupils at Shireland Collegiate Academy in Waterloo Road, Smethwick were given an insight into problem-solving skills and engineering design as part of the [Year of Engineering](#) campaign, backed by Highways England.

The campaign aims to bring young people face to face with engineering experiences and role models by showcasing the creativity and innovation of engineering careers. By engaging with youngsters, it also helps to widen the pool of young people from all backgrounds who are willing to consider the profession, diversifying a workforce that is 91% male and 94% white.

And the visit to Smethwick, which took place on Thursday 28 June, was fitting given its proud industrial heritage which dates back to at least the mid-16th century.

Highways England Executive Director of Human Resources, San Johal, said:

This was a wonderful opportunity to speak to youngsters in an area which has a background of industry and engineering. It was great to spend a morning encouraging future generations to consider working with Highways England. By speaking to youngsters and getting them to think about engineering as part of this campaign we can build links with schools to increase the awareness of what Highways England has to offer as a future employer.

Those attending the event also had the opportunity to take part in a special question and answer session with senior members of the Highways England executive team where they could learn more about apprenticeships programmes with Highways England and possible routes into the sector.

Shireland Collegiate Academy is a large inner city secondary school in Smethwick. Over the past few years the Academy has gained a reputation for effective use of technology to improve standards, innovative curriculum design and embedding new approaches to learning. The Academy has been judged as Outstanding by Ofsted in 2006, 2010 and 2013.

Head of Design and Engineering from Shireland Collegiate Academy, Liam Fletcher, said:

Working in collaboration with Highway's England has been an exciting opportunity to offer our students an invaluable insight into the world of work with a particular focus on engineering.

We had the pleasure of welcoming members of Highway England's executive team to the academy. Our students really enjoyed the

chance to listen to the journeys taken by the executive team to reach their positions and were even more excited to find out how they could begin their own journeys.

Any young people inspired to explore a career in engineering are encouraged to visit the Year of Engineering [website](#) which has further information.

### **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

### **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.