

## School children build bridges with University of Birmingham engineers

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The School of Civil Engineering at the University of Birmingham is pioneering a new initiative to take bridge construction out to local schools and sixth forms to engage young people in the discipline. Visiting 10 and 11 year-olds at a local primary school today (Monday 29 April), this is the first session of an exciting new idea to encourage school children to get hands on with engineering.



A pop-up construction site enables pupils to piece together a real 15 metre-long cable-stayed bridge using scale drawings and assisted by experts from the University. The challenge will help budding engineers to understand the complexities of bridge design and construction and get real experience of the kind of projects they could be involved with if they study civil engineering at university.

Working in partnership with Interserve and with the support of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), the bridge has been created to replicate a common cable-stayed bridge design with 1m x 0.5m base panels, cables and supports, which can be pieced together to form a full working structure. Pupils taking part in the project will learn about working on a construction site, including health and safety and they will have the opportunity to speak with senior engineers about what it is like to study or work as an engineer.

Professor Mark Sterling, Head of the School of Civil Engineering, said 'We are looking forward to constructing our bridge at the first school today and seeing how the school children engage engineering, an integral part of our society. The University is committed to public engagement and this new scheme demonstrates important dialogue between engineers and the local community through innovative fun activities.'

This first session will take place at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Primary School, Harborne, Birmingham and the programme is planned to roll out at schools and sixth forms across the city in the next school term.

### Notes to editors

Image: the cable-stayed bridge fully constructed at the University of Birmingham

The pilot project will comprise two sessions (morning and afternoon) for year 5 and year 6 students.

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