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Barhale Builds Bridges with New Cumnock Primary School



Leading independent infrastructure specialist Barhale, which is working on the new Cumnock Flood Prevention Scheme, has been introducing some of the skills and techniques of civil engineering to local school children.

Barhale team members took 64 year six and seven pupils from New Cumnock Primary through the Institution of Civil Engineering supported “Bridges to Schools” project earlier this month. Providing a fun and educational insight into civil engineering, children are tasked to build and then dismantle a 12m long, model cable stayed bridge.

“The pupils have really enjoyed their experience and embraced the opportunity to learn about the flood prevention scheme,” says Head Teacher, Joanna McMurdo. “The Bridges to Schools event provided the children with a great opportunity to work as a team to learn about civil engineering. Thank you to Barhale and East Ayrshire Council for providing this opportunity and involving the community in this project.”

The interactive civil engineering project was made all the more pertinent and interesting as Barhale is working on phase one of the flood prevention scheme at the Leggate, New Cumnock which will protect properties in the immediate vicinity of the Connel Burn from future flooding, and a number of its site team helped the children build the bridges.

“The children seemed to really enjoy the bridge building exercise,” says Barhale’s Patrick Seymour, Regional Manager, Scotland. “I have been involved with the “Bridges to Schools” for a number of years and I think it is a very important initiative. The UK is renowned for civil engineering expertise around the world and to maintain that reputation it’s vital that we make our industry exciting and inspire the next generation.”

“The site team, led by David Nisbet and Katie Walker, have built a really good relationship with the local community. There are a number of the local residents that the flood prevention scheme is designed to protect that have children in this school and hopefully we have inspired some of them to

be future engineers. Even if that's not the case, we hope that they had fun and learnt why STEM subjects are important, as well as developing skills such as team work and problem solving."

The thoughts are echoed by Stewart Turner, Head of Roads for Ayrshire Road Alliance who says: "The New Cumnock Flood Prevention project is very important for the community. In the past, people here have experienced severe flooding and this project will ensure that their homes are protected going forward.

"It demonstrates how important civil engineering is, so it has been great that the Ayrshire Road Alliance and Barhale have been able to bring it to life for the children at New Cumnock Primary with the "Bridges to Schools" initiative.

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Institution of Civil Engineers and it is running a year of events and activities that show how civil engineering has transformed the way we live and the range of careers that the industry offers. A year-long exhibition on the unsung heroes behind engineering projects is taking place as well as a chance for everyone to see or visit civil engineering in their area. Elsewhere, a commemorative book has been published that features Barhale.

Barhale's work on the Cumnock Flood Prevention Scheme has been highly praised by the Considerate Contractors Scheme with the monitor's site report saying: "Overall this is one of the best small projects I have visited."

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