

Blundell's School crowned winner of the BP Ultimate STEM Challenge 2019

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Young scientists from Blundell's School win national STEM competition with their invention of a measuring device designed for coffee machines that measure any size of cups cutting down on plastic pollution and one use cup.

Two students from Blundell's School near Tiverton in East Devon have won the BP Ultimate STEM Challenge at an event held at the Science Museum in London.

Sophia Rochfort and Freya Gillard were praised by the judges for their innovative scientific thinking, excellent presentation skills and passion for technology and engineering.

STEM education integrates science, technology, engineering and mathematics and helps students gain a better understanding of how important these subjects are for industry and for their futures.

Now in its fifth year, the BP Ultimate STEM Challenge invites students aged 11-14 to put their science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills to the test by developing a solution to a real-world problem.

The BP Ultimate STEM Challenge aims to bridge that gap by engaging young people with new challenges that highlight the benefit of STEM study and the array of careers available in STEM.

BP, as a long-term supporter of STEM, encourages the vision that all young people in the UK should receive a world-leading STEM education, which allows student creativity through experiments and engineering.

This year's competition theme was to create an innovative design solution for an everyday problem. On the day, the 11 finalist teams from 10 secondary schools presented their work to an expert judging panel as part of a BP Ultimate STEM Challenge Science Fair.

The judging panel consisted of leading scientists and engineers including Bill Hedges, Chief Engineer at BP, Kerry Baker, Strategic Initiatives Lead at STEM Learning, Hilary Leever, CEO of Engineering UK and Roger Highfield, Director of Science at the Science Museum.

The winning project was a measuring device for coffee machines that measure cups before pouring making it suitable for any cup, cutting down on plastic pollution and one use cups. The team won £1000 to spend on science equipment or field trips, as well as Science Museum goodies.

Three student teams were also rewarded for their innovative thinking and creativity. Bredon Hill Academy and Walton Priory Middle School won the 'Highly Commended' awards, while Colyton Grammar School were awarded 'Best Stand'. All the finalist teams received a prize bag of Science Museum goodies and a bronze CREST award.

Freya Gillard part of the school's winning team said:

"We're both very pleased to have won! We can't believe it! We're so excited to tell the school when we get back."

The best part of our experience was designing and building the prototype, it was a lot of fun! We also loved presenting today and meeting all the other finalists"

Dr Attila Teiermayer, Head of Science at Blundell's School said:

"Both the team and the school have worked really hard, so winning today is a fantastic reward for everybody's effort. All the students here today deserve a lot of credit for their enthusiasm, innovation and teamwork.

Giving these students the chance to present their ideas, and bring them face-to-face with leading engineers and scientists as positive role models, has given them a truly memorable experience."

Ian Duffy, Head of UK communications and community development for BP, said:

"The creativity and enthusiasm that students bring to the BP Ultimate STEM Challenge every year is truly inspiring, and that has been particularly true at this year's final. Our long-term ambition has been to address the STEM skills gap through targeted investment at all levels of education, so it's a pleasure to be at the final today, celebrating the achievements of these inspirational young people from schools around the country.

By showing students how engineers and scientists make a difference to the world through solutions to everyday problems, we can encourage more young people to pursue STEM studies now and in the future."

Kerry Baker, Strategic Initiatives Lead at STEM Learning said:

It has been an absolute pleasure to be a judge at today's event – not only in viewing the impressive work the groups have produced but also to meet such enthusiastic and interesting young people with a love of STEM. Engagement with activities such as this, led by strong STEM companies, supported by STEM Ambassadors and often delivered in STEM Clubs enables young people to experience and understand the reality and importance of STEM to our lives, now and in the future, and inspire them to consider STEM routes for their future jobs and careers"

Roger Highfield, Science Director at the Science Museum said:

"It has been a huge honour to welcome all the budding scientists, engineers and innovators to the Science Museum today. I've been really impressed by the projects and prototypes created by these schoolchildren for the BP Ultimate STEM Challenge, and it was really difficult to select a winner from such a range of inspiring projects. Congratulations to all the finalists, who showed huge energy, ingenuity and enthusiasm when they reimagined solutions to real-life problems. It's inspiring to see so many young people fired up by STEM, since our future economy, quality of life and prosperity are so dependent on innovation."

NOTES TO EDITORS

Images attached of the Ultimate BP STEM Challenge 2019 winner – Sophia and Freya of Blundell's School near Tiverton in Devon

Images attached of the Ultimate BP STEM Challenge 2019 judges

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About the Ultimate STEM Challenge

The Ultimate STEM Challenge aims to promote the importance of STEM education in schools to develop talent, skills and a strong culture of STEM in the community to support the jobs of the future. Aimed at students in key stage 3 who have yet to make their GCSE choices, the Ultimate STEM Challenge builds on the insights of the Enterprising Science research programme from 2013-18 with University College London, King's College London and the Science Museum Group. This developed the concept of science capital (www.bp.com/sciencecapital) as a way of understanding how and why young people make choices about their STEM futures.

www.bp.com/ultimatestemchallenge

About BP and BP's commitment to STEM education

BP is one of the world's leading international energy companies operating in around 78 countries and employing around 73,000 people. It provides customers with fuel for transportation, energy for heat and light, lubricants to keep engines moving, and the petrochemicals products used to make everyday items as diverse as paints, clothes and packaging.

For over 50 years, BP has been working to address the STEM skills gap through targeted investment at all levels of education. BP's early STEM initiatives began as a teaching resource that has since grown into a comprehensive programme contributing to every stage of education, including early years, primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational.

BP invests in STEM-related educational activities across the UK and estimates its resources have reached over 1.4 million UK students over the past three years.

www.bp.com/STEM.

In order to inspire participating schools to continue running their STEM Clubs and engaging with STEM-based enrichment activities, the BP Educational Service website now has a dedicated STEM Clubs section. This sits alongside a suite of classroom teaching resources developed in response to the research, which seeks to further demonstrate that science is for everyone and can be found everywhere.

About STEM Learning

STEM Learning support teachers of science, technology, computing and mathematics in working towards our vision that all young people, across the UK, should be receiving a world-leading STEM education.

STEM Learning operates the National STEM Learning Centre and Network; providing support locally, through Science Learning Partnerships across England, and partners in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; the network of STEM Ambassadors; alongside a range of other projects supporting STEM education.

STEM Ambassadors are volunteers from a broad range of jobs and backgrounds who are passionate about inspiring young people to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) studies and careers. With a community of over 40,000 volunteers, they are an important, free of charge resource for individuals and groups working with young people across www.stem.org.uk