

More London and Mace: Building London Creating Futures; Schools Visit

As part of the Social Inclusion Programme, a team from Mace's More London project marked Schools' Industry Week by going into St Michael's RC School in Bermondsey to talk to a group of 16 year old female school students about the careers available to them in construction.

A show of hands introduced the team to the size of the challenge - when asked if any of them had considered construction as a career not one girl put her hand up. But following the presentations over two thirds of the young women said they would now consider joining the industry.

The session started with a brief introduction to Mace using images of the London Eye and City Hall, landmarks just down the road from the school. Each Mace team member did a brief presentation on their current role at Mace, their qualifications and background.

Project Director Mike Barford made a great impression explaining his job, how he got into the industry, his likes and dislikes and how much he enjoys working with such a variety of people. He ended his presentation with a photo of him and the Queen at the opening of City Hall! Chris Hall, Design Manager at More London impressed the class with a technical drawing and photos of how the area will eventually look. Andy Hider, M&E Cost Manager explained the different routes into the industry and talked the class through his traditional apprenticeship, working abroad, the benefits of on-the-job training and how M&E (Mechanical and Electrical engineering) makes a building "come alive".

Eve Light, Social Inclusion Programme Manager, ran through her varied career history and explained how her current role is to help to recruit more women and local people into the industry. Tony Blackledge, Senior Construction Superintendent, ended the session giving the young women tangible inspiration, explaining the 7 year process of qualification he had taken and linking it in with the Olympics in 2012. He told the girls that if they started on a construction path now they would be qualified in time to work on the Olympics.

Jess May, Trainee Manager with Mace at More London was available after the presentations to answer questions and encourage the girls to help themselves to the literature and other goodies the team had taken along.

The teacher at St Michael's said "It makes a real difference to our students to be taken seriously by adults, and introduced to careers they had never heard of before the discussion. It's a great way of raising student's aspirations and hopes for the future."

The school presentation is to be followed up with a visit to the More London site, and the school were so impressed they have welcomed the team back to speak to more of their students in the coming months.

For more information on the Social Inclusion Programme and advice on engaging with local communities and schools, please contact Eve Light at elight@mace.co.uk.

