

Hovercraft

TECHNOLOGICALLY minded students used their skills to blow away the competition in a hovercraft design challenge.

Racers

TWO teams from Carmel College joined fellow Year 9 students, from seven schools across Darlington, to design, build and race their own mini hovercraft.

The event, hosted by Darlington's Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, was part of a Foundation for Jobs initiative to help students understand the benefits of careers in engineering and the importance of science, technology, engineering and

maths both at school and in further education.

Working with more than 6,000 young people since its launch in January 2012, the national award-winning Foundation for Jobs is a joint initiative set up to tackle youth unemployment involving The Northern Echo, Darlington Borough Council and the Darlington Partnership.

In the latest project students were challenged to design and build a working hovercraft, from insulation board and plastic sheeting.

They had to calculate the dimensions and proportions of the vehicle, taking into account the weight of the pilot as well as other design constraints, including the size of the engine, which was fashioned from a garden leaf blower.

Each team of eight students then raced



Above and below: Team Carmel design and build their hovercraft

each other before prizes were awarded for performance and design.

Foundation for Jobs chairman Coun Chris McEwan said: "The hovercraft event is one of our most popular activities of the year and gives pupils a better understanding of how the science and



maths they learn at school can be used to solve real world challenges, such as building one of these hovercraft.

“All the teams did incredibly well with each producing a working hovercraft and doing this in a fun environment, while developing team working skills. Hopefully this will inspire some of these young people taking part to become our engineers of the future.”

Carmel College’s team one hovercraft driver Connor Smith, 15, of Newton Aycliffe, said: “The challenge was a lot of fun. “I’m still not sure what I want to do when I leave school but today has given me more of an idea of what jobs are out there in the engineering sector.”

Team two driver Harley Cram, 14, of Darlington added: “I didn’t think engineering could be so much fun.”



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