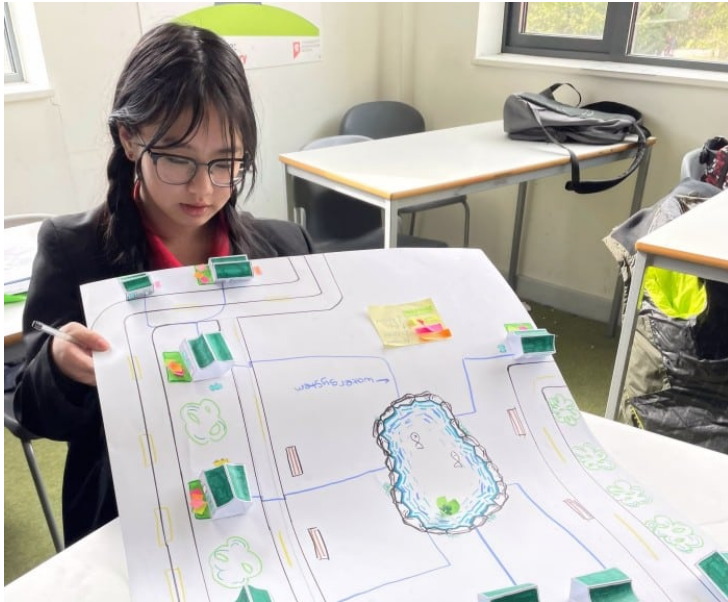


## Willmott Dixon marks 1,000th student completing employability initiative

3 years ago



Willmott Dixon's focus on supporting local upskilling has reached a major milestone with Birmingham Year 8 pupil Miki Lin becoming the 1,000th person to complete its enrichment programme to equip young people with key skills to succeed in the workplace.

Since the enrichment programme was established in 2016, the company has delivered it across 25 schools, with students benefiting from more than 600,000 hours of learning provided by Willmott Dixon people.

The six-week programme, aimed at pupils between Years 7 and 10, enables them to get involved in a wide range of construction and employability-related activities. It allows young people like Miki to receive first-hand insight from the Willmott Dixon team about a range of operational, design, digital and customer-focused roles the company has. Pupils also get a virtual tour of a live site before completing a bespoke class assignment designed to give them valuable practical knowledge of construction alongside broader employability skills.

Miki's cohort received a virtual site tour of Willmott Dixon's £78m Perry Barr Residential Scheme as well as its office in central Birmingham in order to design a sustainable village that drew on their research and linked-in with their school's academic studies.

Miki, who is a 13-year-old pupil at the Willmott Dixon-built University of Birmingham School, said: "I really enjoyed the enrichment programme. It was fun and I especially liked the arts and crafts part of building the village. I knew very little about the construction industry before completing the programme, and it has made me think differently. I thought the construction industry was just people in neon jackets, but I now

know much more about the different job roles and opportunities. It is important to make the right choices and think about the environment when building for the future.”

Upon completion, an Industrial Cadets Bronze Award is awarded to participants – an accolade like the Duke of Edinburgh award, both of which Prince Charles is patron of. Industrial Cadets however recognise the benefits of industry experience, demonstrating transferable construction knowledge and skills that strengthen the CVs of school leavers.

Successful adaptations have also been designed to suit various age ranges – as well as those with special educational needs and disability (SEND) – and offers bespoke focus areas such as sustainability and electronics.

## employability initiative

20 April 2022

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<https://www.youtube.com/embed/GY7gVS2jTRw>

Rebecca Tigie, director of the university training school at the University of Birmingham School, said:

“We are proud to see the success of Willmott Dixon’s enrichment programme, which was exclusive to the University of Birmingham School in its first two years to pilot activities.

“Willmott Dixon built our school in 2016, so to see how the relationship has grown since then – they offer this package of activities to every Year 8 pupil that has passed through our doors – is a huge commitment for which we’re very grateful.

“The experience no doubt leaves a lasting impression on those involved and serves to break down the barriers that might prevent a young person from considering a career in construction – while showing the sheer variety of opportunities available in the sector. The sustainability angle will really capture the imagination of pupils, who are already very enthusiastic about this in their studies.”

Marie Wilkes, senior social value manager at Willmott Dixon, added:

“We are thrilled that Miki is the 1,000th pupil to complete our enrichment programme; it is fitting she is at University of Birmingham School given their support for our programme at the start.

“We have gone on to provide work experience placements to 12 young people as a direct result of this scheme, which we expect to rise as more students progress through education. This year, we’ve ramped up our efforts by adding two new members to our social value team and aim to reach 800 students with the programme this year in the Midlands alone. We would like to thank all of the schools that have shown an interest and partnered with us in our enrichment programme, which has allowed us to form meaningful relationships and have a wider community impact.”

Each programme requires the support of at least five Willmott Dixon colleagues, which is made possible by company-backed volunteering hours.

Miki's cohort follows the completion of an enrichment programme centred on electronics at Etone College in Nuneaton - where students focused on building electrical circuits, and a second at Warwick Evergreen School, which offers SEND support.

To learn more about Willmott Dixon's enrichment programme, visit: [www.willmottdixon.co.uk/enrichment](http://www.willmottdixon.co.uk/enrichment)