

CHEMISTRY AT WORK – The Legoland primary event

The Royal Society of Chemistry runs a series of events called Chemistry at Work whose aims are

- to show young people how chemistry principles are applied in industry, research and everyday life;
- to show a positive image of chemistry as a rewarding, interesting and wealth-creating activity;
- to encourage students to consider careers in chemistry; and
- to show students the importance of chemistry to society.

Events take place over one to three days and groups of students spend half a day at the event visiting about half a dozen twenty-minute-long, hands-on presentations by local companies (or other organisations that use chemistry in their work). Just a few examples of presentations at recent events include:

- dry cleaning, by a consultant dry cleaner;
- testing for diabetes, by a local hospital;
- drug design by SmithKline Beecham;
- platinum in car catalysts, by Johnson Matthey;
- soft drink manufacture, by Coca Cola; and
- the chemistry of cosmetics, by a local college.

There are currently some 15 events each year around the country and the number is rising.

Most of the events are aimed at secondary school students but for the second year running, a primary school event has been run very successfully in the Bracknell area, organised in conjunction with the South East Berkshire Education Business Partnership. This particular event was hosted by Legoland Windsor which provided a splendid venue and most of the schools took the opportunity to extend their visit to a full day with the other half of the day visiting Legoland itself (free of charge!). The chemistry activities at the event included:

- a demonstration (with flashes and bangs!);
- kitchen sink science;
- the chemistry of eggs;
- the chemistry of sport;
- genetic fingerprinting; and
- aromatherapy among many others.

The event was supported by a range of organisations including The Army, Zeneca Agrochemicals, Safeway and Reading University. Feedback suggested that children (and their teachers) had an enjoyable and stimulating day and it is hoped that the event will become an annual one.

There are obvious benefits to the host and to The Society in this sort of arrangement and we will be exploring the possibilities of events at other similar venues for the future.



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