



TAKE OFF: From left, Daniel Evans, aged 15, from Chell Heath, Jason Bradbury, Tegan Moore, aged 15, from Smallthorne, Shoaib Ahmed, aged 15, from Hanley, Jake Seaton, aged 15, from Abbey Hufton, and Jen Conlon, from KMF (Haywood Academy). Picture: Leanne Bagnall

# 'Releasing 25 balloons was out of this world!'

## Engineering students reach for the skies with science project

Emma James

emma.james@thesentinel.co.uk

YOUNG engineers will get a bird's eye view of the world - after releasing giant balloons with cameras attached into space.

Children from 25 schools across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire were tasked with designing capsules for their 'out-of-this-world' science project.

They saw their work gently float into the stratosphere yesterday.

And now the pupils will be able to keep track of where the huge helium-filled balloons have gone via GPS before analysing the data.

It was part of a Young Engineer of the Year competition organised by Chesterton-based precision sheet metal manufacturer KMF.

Teenager Molly Riley, who attends Westwood College in Leek, was delighted to see her hard work pay off at the launch.

The 15-year-old, from Leek, said: "It's been a really interesting day. I can't wait to see where the balloon goes."

Westwood teacher Chris Cottam said the competition had helped capture the imagination of his students.

He said: "The students were all buzzing



PROJECT: Callum Hurst, aged 14, from Porthill, and James McMaster Myatt, aged 15, from May Bank, took part for Wolstanton High School; and right, Daniel Burgess, Cathy Proctor, both aged 15, and Josh Edwards, aged 14, all from Kidsgrove, were on a team from University Academy Kidsgrove.

and really enjoying themselves. The logistics to get 25 weather balloons up in the air and track them all on the same day is amazing.

"It's fantastic that the students will be able to track their balloons."

Other schools involved in the competition included Wolstanton High.

Teacher Chris Burkett said: "We have been involved with KMF since the company started and yet again they have pulled a fantastic event out of the bag."

"I can't imagine any other students

getting to experience this opportunity"

Fellow teacher Will Potts, from Sir Thomas Boughey High School in Halmerend, added: "The country is crying out for new engineers and it's brilliant that a local company has taken it upon themselves to support the engineers of the future."

Jenny Conlon, training manager at KMF, said: "Some of the footage captured by the GoPro cameras of the curvature of the earth is amazing."

"KMF has run the competition for a few years but this one has been bigger and better. The work the students have done is out of this world."

Sentinel Editor-in-Chief Martin Tideswell was at the launch at RAF Tideswell. He said: "This has been a genuinely rewarding project for the students involved - I could see from the excitement on the faces of everyone involved when the balloons were set free."

"The team at KMF - along with their sponsors - deserve huge credit for inspiring scores of young people."

The competition will culminate in an awards ceremony in July.

### The schools that took part...

- Alleyne's High School, In Stone;
- Alsager School, Alsager;
- Biddulph High School, Biddulph;
- Birches Head Academy, Birches Head;
- Clayton Hall Academy, Clayton;
- Haywood High School, Burslem;
- Madeley High School, Madeley;
- Moorside High School,

- Warrington;
- Ormliston Horizon Academy, Tunstall;
- Ormliston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy, Blurton;
- Palsney Catholic College, Cheadle;
- Sandon High, Melr;
- Sir Thomas Boughey, Halmerend;
- St John Fisher, Newcastle;
- St Joseph's College, Trent Vale;
- St Margaret Ward Catholic

- Academy, Little Chell;
- St Peter's Academy, Fenton;
- The Co-operative Academy of Stoke-on-Trent, Tunstall;
- The King's School, Kidsgrove;
- Trentham High School, Trentham;
- University Academy of Kidsgrove, Kidsgrove;
- Wolstanton High School, Wolstanton;
- Westwood College, Leek.

WATCH VIDEO AT  
THESENTINEL.CO.UK

