**Blackpool Back On Track**

'Blackpool Back on Track' is a community project working with Thames Academy in Blackpool. Children of Thames Primary Academy, the Mayor and Mayoress of Blackpool, CRL, Park View 4 U, and Northern Railway were amongst many stakeholders, parents and friends on Tuesday 30th January to celebrate phase one of the project. The Year 4 children (now Year 5) have taken part in CRL’s education programme in summer 2017 visiting Preston station to understand how the railway works. 85 children have been involved in this project.

For the first part of the project the children have carried out research into their local area and visited the local attractions to understand their geographical location to the station. One of the aims of the project are for the children to showcase along the South Fylde line what Blackpool has to offer.

Working with local artist Julie Norman the children have designed a variety of bright and vibrant posters to be displayed along the South Fylde line and at the Blackpool South Station with local attractions along with a map of the local area to direct passenger and tourists to local attractions. The children used a variety of materials and equipment to design these posters as a part of their learning and development including the use of a printing press.

The launch of this part of the project is timely with the re-opening of the South Fylde line which has been closed since November 2017 for the ‘Great North Rail Project’ electrification between Preston and Blackpool and is not only a celebration of the line reopening but recognition of the children’s efforts to promote sustainable travel and contribute towards the local community and its tourism.

The second part of the project will see the children create environmentally friendly ‘bug hotels’ and planting on the disused side of the platform once it has been cleared. This will provide a natural habitat for the local wildlife that resides at the station, a more pleasant atmosphere at the station and a ‘green’ space for children to use for outdoor learning.

Emily Elliott

Community Rail Lancashire