

Rail 200 – Inspiration Train

Five school groups travelled to London Euston on 14-15th July to visit the Inspiration Train — an exciting opportunity to explore the past, present, and future of railway carriages, as well as visit the dedicated Partner Zone.

Each group had a scheduled session where they discovered more about the rail industry and received information about the Avanti West Coast Work Experience Programme, along with a goody bag to take home.

The student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, they enjoyed the interactive activities and learning about careers within the railway industry.



Just wanted to email to say a massive thank you for the careers educational visit to London on Monday. It was incredible and the pupils loved it. To put it into perspective one child who can be challenging to say the least stated he wanted to go into coding on trains as a career.

M.Weaver, Teacher – St Mary's School, Preston



The train is fantastic. Visitor feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with people really engaging with the exhibits. Here's a breakdown of each carriage:

Carriage 1 – Railway Firsts

A mix of railway artefacts, storytelling, and interactive displays gives visitors a great overview of how the railway has shaped the UK over the past 200 years.

Carriage 2 – Wonderlabs on Wheels

A real hit with children! This carriage includes hands-on engineering challenges such as bridge building, wheel making, and problem-solving games — all very engaging.

Carriage 3 – Railway Futures

Showcases a range of careers in the rail industry, from flying drones to weather analysis. The interactive quiz at the end is a fun way to wrap up the experience.

Carriage 4 – Partnership Zone

Half of this carriage is used by staff for storage and breaks, while the other half is allocated to partners such as companies and charities



Carriage 4 – Partner zone



- Limited space
- Access to selfie boards
- Access to TV screen – bring a laptop
- Storage in half of the carriage

Positives

- Excellent exhibits and activities, suitable for a wide age range.
- Very positive feedback from visitors.
- Plenty of helpful volunteers on hand to guide visitors and answer questions.
- Goody bags/handouts were well received

Areas for improvement

- High number of public no-shows. Despite the event being 'sold out,' actual attendance was significantly lower.
- Late cancellation from a school reduced the number of children attending by approximately 100 over the two school days.

Suggestions for Blackpool

- **School Days:** Consider booking school groups every 45 minutes to improve flow and maximise attendance. Ideal target audience: upper primary to lower secondary (Years 6–8).
- **Partner Zone:** Include a table with rail safety activity sheets (e.g. Backtrack), Arlo books, and careers information to enhance engagement and takeaway value. Have extra stalls on the platform and inside the station
- **Public Days:** Offer walk-in slots to reduce the impact of no-shows, ensuring more people can access the train on the day.