

Redbridge Primary School joins with Beal High School to tackle air pollution

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Beal High School and Redbridge Primary School give their presentations at the Redbridge Airaction seminar.

A primary and secondary school in Redbridge joined forces to reduce the spread of harmful gases in the borough.

Air quality presentation at Beal High School



Redbridge Primary School give their presentations at the Redbridge Airaction seminar.

Year 5 class The Ospreys from Redbridge Primary School, in College Gardens, Ilford, has been working with Redbridge Air Action since September 2017.

Five months later, the pupils were ready to share the results of the air quality scheme with Beal High School in a special assembly.

Helen Young, a former lead presenter at BBC Weather who now works for Redbridge Air Action, led the presentation on Thursday (January 25).

She told the Recorder: "The programme educates children about air quality and why it's important.



Redbridge Primary School give their presentations at the Redbridge Airaction seminar.

"London has the worst air quality for nitrogen dioxide in Europe, and that's really damaging for children's health and the elderly.

"It amasses at a low level, under cars, trucks and lorries, and because children are nearer the ground they are more at risk." As part of the air quality programme, the pupils from Redbridge Primary School were given history lessons about The Great Smog in London in the 1950s.

The children took part in science activities where they put up diffusion tubes to sample the air.

These results were then sent off to a laboratory for further analysis.

During the five month scheme, pupils walking to and from school increased from 52pc to 58pc.

Cllr Alan Weinberg MBE spoke at the assembly. He said: "I am old enough to remember the smog in the 1950s, there were days when we were told not to leave our homes because the smog could quite literally kill us. We have come a long way since then but we're not quite there yet.

"I am so pleased that you have this on your agenda. We need not only to use modern technology but to try and keep up with modern technology too."

Robert Sandbrooks from Transport for London (TfL) and Cllr Gurdial Bhamra also attended the assembly.

Cllr Bhamra spoke about his experiences of air pollution in other countries.

He said: "Too many people are driving at fast speeds and too many parents are arriving in cars.

"I have been to countries where I have walked through the streets and my collar has turned black from soot.

"If we all take action we can have better air quality in the whole country."

Pupils from Redbridge Primary School performed a lively presentation showcasing the results of the experiments they had carried out, and all the new facts they have learned about air quality.

The audience was treated to the Year 5 class's performance of Justin Timberlake's Can't Stop the Feeling, retitled Stop Pollution.

They swapped the original lyrics with their own educational lines about reducing air pollution.

The Ospreys pupils' slogan was "be fair, don't pollute the air."

Abbie Malambo, the Redbridge health protection officer, added: "They were absolutely fantastic, it is really good to see the new scientists in waiting.

"Redbridge Council has an air quality action plan which is currently out on consultation. This particular programme is one of the actions on the Redbridge Air Quality Action Plan.

"We are aware that without the engagement of the community, our action plan will not fly."

After Mrs Malambo's speech it was the turn of the youth travel ambassadors from Beal High School to demonstrate what they knew about air quality.

In two drama sketches they showed how easy it can be for children who live nearby to walk to school instead of drive.

The pupils presented their plans to pitch TfL for £250 funding to carry out walking and cycling competitions, and workshops for primary school children.

"The children are always up for it, and are really engaged. The hard part is encouraging parents," said BBC star Helen.

"We are trying to target boroughs which have real air quality issues.

"These two schools are going to join up and work collaboratively. It's lovely that a primary school is working with a secondary school."

