

Car robot gets youngsters behind the wheel 'HONDA'S WORKERS ARE INSPIRING US'

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THE brainpower of children came up against a robot when Honda rolled into Swindon Academy.

The car manufacturer, which is the main sponsor of the academy, visited the Headlands Grove school yesterday and put pupils to the test.

About 20 Honda engineers and apprentices brought along an S2000 car simulator, puzzles, and a robot, for Year 6 workshops.

Children queued up to beat the robot in finding a way through a maze.

"We are showing children the disadvantages and advantages of using robots," said technical training co-ordinator Steve Merry.

"Some people think robots can do anything but they can't. They can do routine commands without mistakes and getting bored. They keep going unlike children who need sleep and a rest. But children can adapt, which robots can't, as they need to be programmed."

Children were also asked to find a new route through the maze, which the robot failed to do as it was only programmed to go one way.

Eleven-year-old Jordan Boyes, of Pinehurst, was faster than the robot.

"It was really fun," he said. "I feel quite good as none of my friends beat the robot. I would like a robot at home and make him clean my room."

Pupils were also tasked with building a bridge, putting knots and bolts together to build a tower, and making cars and boats.

About 120 Year 6 children from the academy's Beech Avenue and Alton Close sites, Seven Fields School, Gorse Hill and Ferndale School took part. This is the second year that Honda has brought the workshops to the school.

Mr Merry said: "These activities help with the children's education. It gets them thinking differently and is about problem solving and teamwork."

"We have strong ties with the school and every year we will be doing more and more."

Scott Dukes, 11, of Pinehurst, said: "We have been making boats, parachutes and trying to beat the robot."

"I am getting on well at making cars as well. This gives us more of a chance to do teamwork."

Assistant principal Jacqui House said: "The pupils absolutely loved it. They have been really talking to the Honda guys. The staff have seen children who have potential. This is about getting them away from a classroom and text books and getting them excited. Honda is fantastic. We would not be able to do this without them."

A free lunch for the children was thrown in during the two-day event.



LOOKING AHEAD

Honda worker Oyestein Machado and Jake Robertson. Below, Adam Whiting in a Honda car simulator

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