

400 pupils at nine Norfolk primary and middle schools have developed their engineering skills in projects sponsored by Norwich based engineering training centre, EAGIT Limited. The projects were designed to encompass engineering skills found in everyday life and included printing, soft furnishings, and food packaging.

The venture resulted from a collaboration between the Norfolk education Inspection Advice and Training Service, EAGIT and the schools. The sponsors wanted to give children in the 10-12 age group an early opportunity to explore the world of engineering before job and career paths had formulated in their minds. One of the delights of the children's work was the way in which such a wide variety of engineering applications were identified and developed.

Each school submitted an outline for a project that they were beginning to plan, and further work was done with the help of industrialists and advisory staff. Where needs for specialist support or training were identified this was provided either by LEA staff or by EAGIT. In many cases this was an opportunity for teachers as well as children to learn new skills. Teachers particularly valued the opportunity for time to plan projects in conjunction with

others, and to feel that their efforts were recognised by those working in industry. They also valued the flexibility of the financial support which they could target to the particular needs of their own project. For once they could afford to be 'developmental' without always thinking about the cost!

Fundamental to all projects was the opportunity for teachers and children to visit industrial locations as stimulus for designing and making. Visits ranged widely, and included an automated wrappings company, a timber yard, and the Norwich mail sorting centre. It was an essential part of the venture that children researched and recorded aspects of their awareness of 'systems'. This led to a very broad range of individual and collaborative

Below: Touring the displays, Mrs Margaret Duigan, MBE, Chairman, Norfolk County Council, described them as wonderful examples of how childrens imagination and creativity can be channelled, given the right support and encouragement. Mrs Duigan is pictured with David Shorten, General Manager, EAGIT Ltd., talking to pupils from Old Catton Middle School about their confectionery production and packaging project.

## Eagit Schools Engineering Project A Great Success

**Ian MacGregor**

*Norfolk IATS*



The judges took an intense interest in every Project and commended them all on the excellent quality of work and innovation displayed.



design and make tasks within each project. A variety of 'specialists' also visited children at work to help them with their projects. In one case the school building inspector gave advice over the construction of a puppet theatre!

Working closely with Chris Hemmings and Ian MacGregor of the Norfolk advisory service the sponsorship of EAGIT had ensured that each school was supplied with the appropriate materials for individual projects. Where necessary, support also included supply teacher funding, reference books, industrial and commercial visits and specialist advice from EAGIT and IATS personnel. By the end of their projects, each of the nine schools had received £1,000 worth of materials and support.

The culmination of the pupils' efforts was on public display in the foyer of Norfolk County Hall, Norwich, where visitors were able to see just how imaginative and skilful the children had been. Awards were made to three schools. Children from one, Poringland County Primary School, had redesigned and modelled alternative ways of handling the Royal Mail at Norwich station. Headteacher, Roger Everett, was delighted at his pupils' success. 'They have worked very hard, thoroughly enjoyed themselves and shown great initiative. There is no doubt in my mind that the project has raised the awareness of engineering in their minds. It was also very relevant educationally, not only for Technology but across the curriculum, which is excellent from the school's point of view'.

Hethersett Middle School children created a Puppet Theatre (including the puppets, working aspects of the theatre, composing their own music and recording their own sound track for puppet plays). Larkman Middle School's project involved soft furnishings (including computer-aided fabric design and machinery control).

Michael Edwards, Norfolk County Education Officer, praised everyone who had been involved in the project, especially the school children. 'I was fascinated by the originality of your projects and I hope you will continue to look at engineering as exciting, challenging and essential. The country needs youngsters like you for our future'. Endorsing this EAGIT Chairman, Derek George, thanked all the teaching staff for their superb support. 'We have seen marketing, design, innovation, the use of hard and soft materials plus the application of engineering skills ranging from electronic to mechanical'.