

## CSR case studies



# BMW Group

Focusing on education and the environment at BMW Plant Hams Hall.

### ● The company

BMW Group is the leading premium manufacturer in the automotive industry with circa 103,000 employees and 23 production sites in 12 countries. It manufactures BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce vehicles.

BMW in the UK operates at several locations, including Hams Hall near Birmingham. This plant commenced production of four-cylinder petrol engines for BMW and subsequently MINI in 2001 and now employs more than 1,000 people.

BMW Group develops the guiding principles and strategies for the company's approach to sustainability and tasks each business unit to apply them in a way that is applicable to local circumstances.

BMW Group in the UK launched its first-ever Sustainable Value Report in mid-2008 to build on the Environmental Report it published in 2005. The report details recent environmental and social sustainability performance in the UK according to five key areas of interest: product development, environment, economic impact, workplace and society. BMW is a signatory of the UN Global Compact and its approach to monitoring and measuring sustainability performance is guided by this commitment.

*This case study profiles the innovative initiatives being undertaken at Hams Hall Engine Plant to support education and protect the environment.*

### ● The drivers

In 2002, BMW Plant Hams Hall carried out a regional survey to elicit stakeholder feedback and inform decision-making for raising local awareness of the newly established plant. The survey involved 500 telephone interviews, five focus groups and around 30 one-to-one interviews with key regional stakeholders. The two key priorities identified through this research were protecting and managing the environment and supporting schools and education.

In addition, part of Hams Hall's mission is to create a workplace that inspires and to show how exciting manufacturing and engine production can be.

### ● Taking action

In recognition of, and in response to local stakeholder views, Hams Hall became the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust's first corporate Gold Member at the beginning of 2003. [Warwickshire Wildlife Trust](#) is the leading local environmental charity, protecting wildlife and natural places throughout Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull. Hams Hall gives the Trust financial support through its membership, pays for the publications which inform potential corporate members and has been used as a flagship to attract additional corporate membership.

In 2007, BMW decided to develop its partnership with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust through an innovative education project. The two organisations collaborated to run the Hams Hall Discovery Day that autumn for

ninety children, aged between 14 and 15, from three different schools in the West Midlands.

The underlying purpose of the day was to show the children how wildlife and technology can co-exist. BMW's Hams Hall site, formerly one of Europe's largest coal-fired power stations, is an ideal location for this. Strict environmental management and biodiversity considerations were incorporated into its development from the outset. Landscaping features around the factory include woodland, wild flora areas, extensive shrubbery and grassed areas. There are also lakes fed by rainwater from the roofs of factory buildings. All of these areas are ideal habitats for various kinds of wildlife.

BMW employees and Wildlife Trust educational officers managed the logistics and supervision of activities for the Discovery Day. Activities ranged from pond-dipping and the exploration of managed outdoor areas to a tour of the production facilities where children learnt about how BMW manages waste and energy. The children were encouraged to draw their own conclusions about environmental management and wildlife protection. Participant feedback from the Discovery Day attested to the event's success.

BMW Plant Hams Hall also hosts school visits. For example, in February 2008, a Year 9 class visited the site to experience firsthand the benefits of foreign language skills in the workplace. By speaking to some of the bilingual BMW employees, the children learnt about additional professional opportunities foreign languages can bring both within the UK and abroad. As a result of this visit, the uptake of pupils studying GCSE German increased from 14 to 28. This visit was carried out as part of the Business Language Champions Programme in partnership with the Regional Language Network West Midlands.

Hams Hall has also partnered with the Warwickshire Education Business Partnership to host school visits as part of programmes giving participants with a special interest in

manufacturing and engineering an insight into the world of work.

Recently, Hams Hall also became a non-financial business partner of the St Albans CE School, Birmingham's first specialist engineering college. BMW has supported St Albans in its successful bid to become an Academy school by providing plant tours and work experience opportunities, as well as providing industry expertise to complement development of the future curriculum.

In 2008, for the fifth consecutive year, BMW Hams Hall was the 'principal partner' of the Lichfield Festival, a festival of culture and the arts. Education is a central aspect of this partnership with young people from local schools being given the opportunity to perform at public venues, including the BMW restaurant at Hams Hall itself. In the past, lunchtime performances have included dancing, a Gamelan percussion concert and a band playing music it composed to accompany a silent film.

#### ● **Business benefits**

By investing in education, BMW Plant Hams Hall is raising the profile of its business in the community local to the plant and helping the company to attract the workforce of the future.

BMW employees who help to host the visits have become more motivated through their personal involvement in the community and have improved their presentation skills.

#### ● **Why is it CSR?**

The education programmes run by BMW Plant Hams Hall have been developed in response to feedback received from external stakeholders who are based in the vicinity of the plant. They involve mutually beneficial partnerships such as that with St Albans CE School. In addition, they proactively address future risks to business sustainability, such as employee shortages, by helping to stimulate school aged childrens' enthusiasm about the prospect of working in the automotive/ engineering industry.

● **What next?**

The team at Hams Hall will continue their efforts to support education and develop productive and long-standing relationships with local schools and community groups.

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For further information, please contact Article 13 on 020 8840 4450 or visit [www.article13.com](http://www.article13.com).

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