

#MonthlyMotivation: Emma Cowie (class of 2010)



Emma's interest in buildings was sparked whilst she was at school, but it wasn't until she started working that she found her passion for designing larger structures.

What have you been up to since leaving Putney?

After leaving school in 2010, I went on to Leeds University to study Architectural Engineering.

Now, I am working as a Senior Structural Engineer at a design-led Structural and Civil Engineering Consultancy and I passed my professional exams last year so I am now fully qualified!

What do you do as a Senior Structural Engineer?

I work very closely with both my clients and architects to create buildings and spaces.

The architect draws up a design and I then design the structure - which involves lots of drawings, calculations and computer software. I spend a lot of time problem solving to ensure the building not only looks good but also works structurally and is sustainable - which is often a balancing act.

Once a project is on site, I attend the site regularly (and normally get very muddy!) to ensure the building is being built in accordance with our drawings.

What do you think helps you during the project process?

To help ensure that a project runs smoothly, I think it's really important to spend time building good relationships with the design team members.

What do you find particularly enjoyable in your job?

One of my favourite parts of my job is walking past a building and knowing that I designed it - I still find it really exciting!

What made you choose engineering?

To be honest, I always knew I wanted to work in the 'built environment and construction' industry, and now, I'm so glad I do! I really hope that I am lucky enough to always work in this industry, especially as it is always changing and adapting to new technologies and world events.

Did you do anything related to structural engineering whilst you were still at school?

Whilst I was at school, I was more interested in designing houses, and so I did two-weeks work experience with an architect. This really sparked my interest, but it wasn't until I started working that I became more interested in larger structures.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking about a career in engineering?

If you like problem solving, numbers and people, then I would consider a career in engineering - it is so varied and there are so many different areas to go into.

If you're thinking about what A-Levels would be helpful, you have to have Maths and I would highly recommend Physics or Chemistry as well. For your third subject, you can do anything - potentially something creative; for example, I chose DT, but one of my best friends studied music.

To get to where you are now, what would you say have been some of the challenges?

Not many girls do engineering but Putney helped me pursue my scientific side and I am so glad I was encouraged to do physics and maths!

I also struggled a lot with exams, however people both at school and university have always encouraged me to carry on pursuing my dreams. Following this, I learnt that determination really pays off and I recently passed my Chartership exams to become professionally qualified.