DEAF PUPILS TALK TO ASTRONAUTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION IN A WORLD FIRST

Sunday 12 September, 2021

A group of pupils at the Mary Hare School for deaf children in Newbury will be talking to an Astronaut aboard the International Space Station (ISS) as it orbits above them at 11,000 miles per hour.

Mary Hare School, with Pippa Middleton as its Ambassador, is the largest school for deaf children in the UK.

In October 2021 the school will be using Amateur Radio equipment set up with the help of Radio Amateurs from the Newbury and District Amateur Radio Society (NADARS).

These will be the first deaf children to have done this, making it a world first. The pupils will each ask a question to the astronaut who will then answer live over amateur radio. The reply will then be interpreted into subtitles.

During September the school will be running a competition inviting students to enter their question from one of five categories, science in space, space technology, living in space, space communication and earth from space. The ten best questions were chosen by staff and those students invited to ask their question on the day of broadcast. ‘It is a very exciting event – a world first for deaf pupils,’ said Mr Ayling a science teacher at the school. ‘I think it is very important to our deaf pupils as it shows whatever your challenges with communication there is no limit to what you can achieve. The sky is not the limit.’

The event will be made possible by the world-wide organisation ARISS (Amateur Radio International Space Station) that heads up the amateur radio contacts for space agencies NASA and ESA. The ISS has an Amateur Radio station on board and the Astronauts are also licenced Radio Amateurs. The signal will be transmitted and received on the VHF Amateur band and can be heard live all over the UK using amateur radios or scanners. There will also be a live web feed available on the internet enabling people to watch the event worldwide including Mission Control, Houston!

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