

Eco-friendly 'Frankenbus' launch helps pupils learn

Schoolchildren on board for lessons in science

SONIA SHARMA

THESE young scientists have been learning more about eco-friendly transport.

The children, dressed up as boffins, helped to launch Arriva's new hybrid electric buses in Whitley Bay, North Tyneside, yesterday.

The group from Marine Park First School were taught about the vehicles at an assembly before science students from Newcastle University held various experiments to get the youngsters interested in the subject.

The 10 new double-decker "Frankenbuses", partly powered by electricity and partly by diesel, will be used on the 308 route, which runs from Blyth to Newcastle, taking in Whitley Bay, Billy Mill and The Coast Road.

The vehicles were introduced by Arriva in an effort to reduce emissions after the firm made a successful bid to the Government's Green Bus Fund.

The children, who have

been learning about energy efficiency in school, gave the scheme a thumbs-up.

Pupil Tilly Ward, eight, of

Whitley Bay, said: "We have learned that the bus is powered by electricity and a teeny bit of diesel, which is good because it will be more environmentally friendly."

"We have been doing lots of things in school to help the environment, like planting trees. We will also be going to a farm. I enjoy it."

Isla Butler, seven, added: "We have been taught about transport and cars, and how we should not waste energy."

It is better to walk or cycle. If you have to take a bus, then it's good if it runs on electricity.

"I am also in an eco-club, and I help to hold presentations in assembly, in which we tell everyone how to help the environment."

Finlay Elliot, seven, said science was his favourite subject. He added: "I love science because you get to study dif-

ferent things, like how machines work.

"I enjoyed seeing the bus that works with electricity."

The 308 route is used by around 27,000 people a week.

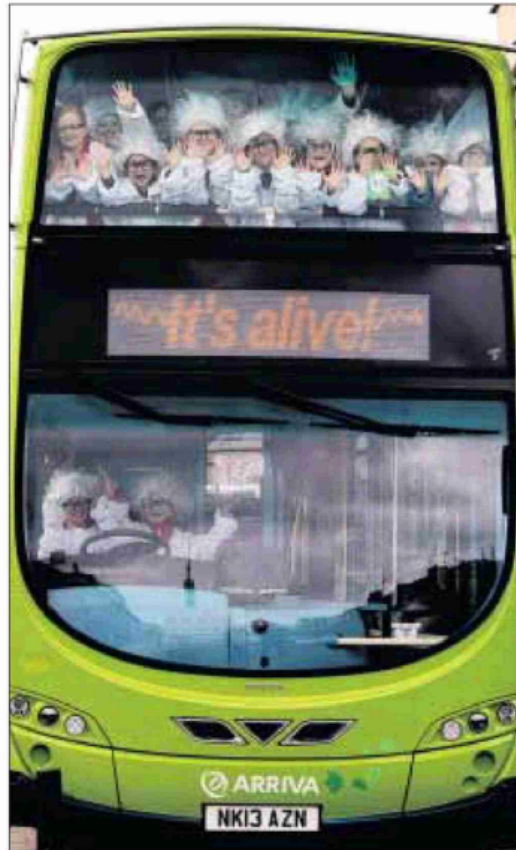
Nick Knox, area managing director for Arriva North East, said: "This investment is great news for our customers, and we're delighted to be investing in this 21st-century technology."

"Hopefully, it will also encourage more people to jump on board and make more journeys by bus."

Hybrid buses are quieter, cleaner and more fuel-efficient than diesel vehicles. They also have regenerative braking, which means they can generate electrical energy when the brakes are pressed.



SCIENCE FUN Annabel and Madeleine with "Mad Scientist" Joe Winterschluden



GREEN MACHINE An [Arriva](#) "Frankenbus", one of 10 new hybrid electric busses