

Developing student space ambassadors and engaging with HEI, schools and the wider community - Norham Community Technology College

Leading space education programme

Key actions

We developed a year long Space Ambassadors programme with an aim to create a passion for space that could be passed on to other students. The programme involved weekly specialist training sessions and an e-mission with the National Space Centre.

The Space Ambassador scheme involved 24 students who met together every Tuesday afternoon to be trained in space education. Activities included space related investigations such as the meteor investigation and rocket making as well as exploring life on a space station. Students were also involved in an E-mission with the National Space Centre. Students found this really challenging but a captivating opportunity. One student said "It was really exciting and much harder than I thought... we had to work as a team."

The pinnacle of this programme was a 3 day residential trip to London and Leicester.

The trip started with an exploration of the National Space Centre in Leicester where students experienced a tour of the planets, could participate in Astronaut training and explore space memorabilia. Students were inspired by the space story and the impact it had on their everyday lives. High staff- student ratios enabled lots of time for questioning from staff to develop student understanding.

From Leicester the group headed south to London for an action packed two days. First stop was the Science Museum where students were inspired by the large scale space memorabilia including large size rockets; students had never seen a museum so vast as for many it was the first trip to London. One aspiring engineer said the museum inspired him to pursue a career in space.

The next day, we set off south of the Thames to the Royal Observatory in Greenwich. We visited the only planetarium in London, watching a show about the stars. The show used real footage of the skies in Greenwich, viewed through a telescope the previous night. We were guided through the stars and constellations by a resident astronomer; it was an awesome sight. It did make some of us quite sleepy though at the end of a busy trip! After exploring the interactive astronomy exhibits we headed to the meridian line, the centre point from which space (0° longitude) and time (Greenwich Mean Time) are measured.

On returning to school students were able to share their passion for space with their families and their peers. One student was inspired to take her family to visit the sights in London as they had never been.

Impact on lead and partners schools

The programme has proved an inspiration for staff that have seen students become excited about the science of space. The uptake of Triple Science has increased from 5 to 20 students.

Impact on specialism

We have developed links with Durham University as a result of the Space Ambassadors programme.

The model for the Space Ambassadors programme could easily be shared with partner schools; links with these schools has been enhanced through the programme.

Top tips

We had hoped to send our Space Ambassadors to Kennedy Space Centre as part of LSEP but were unable to raise sufficient funds. This would have had a greater impact upon students and the whole school community.

The future

Staff are now experienced in delivering the Space Ambassadors programme and could share best practice with colleagues/ partner schools.

Contact at school

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Images from the programme



