

## Engaging partner primary schools using space as a vehicle - St Peter's Catholic School and Specialist Science College

### Leading space education programme

#### Key actions

##### Engaging Partner Primary Schools using Space as a Vehicle

This project involved year 5 pupils from our 5 partner primary schools. The project took place over the Spring and Summer Terms. The aims were to enthuse and engage pupils about Space and to focus on transition from KS2 to KS3. We were building on existing projects on STEM enrichment done previously through the science specialism.

Joint planning for the project began in the Autumn Term with a meeting between the primary school science co-ordinators and staff from St Peter's. We planned a launch event in the primary schools, a space competition and opportunities for the year 5 pupils to experience space enrichment activities at St Peter's.

The project was launched by visits to the schools with Moon Rocks and Meteorites loaned by the [STFC Lunar Loan Scheme](#), which is free to schools. Our staff taught a lesson to the year 5 pupils on the Phases of the Moon using ICT and role play activities. The lesson provided CPD for the primary teachers on the use of innovative teaching and learning styles to teach this difficult concept. Pupils were given the unique opportunity to handle these rare and incredibly precious samples.

The space competition followed the launch. Primary pupils were invited to make a model of a space station using whichever materials or media they wished. The prize was for the pupils with top four designs from each school to experience an inflatable planetarium at St Peter's during National Science and Engineering Week. They also received a space book with a commemorative bookplate. The winning designs were displayed in the school entrance.

The project ended with a celebration event where year 5 pupils visited St Peter's to see the Starchaser 'Skybolt' rocket and have a high octane presentation from the Starchaser Team. This work was followed up with a creative writing project in the primary schools.

Approximately 200 pupils were involved. Evaluations suggested a high level of enjoyment (97%), with 100% stating that they had learned something really interesting during the project. Admissions for September indicate a higher proportion of pupils from our harder to reach primary partners have indicated St Peter's as their first choice secondary schools.

#### Impact on lead and partners schools

CPD provided increased confidence for primary staff and interest in further CPD in STEM for the future as well as interest in Science Learning Centre courses hosted by St Peter's. The project improved transition links and encouraged primary staff to borrow resources and ask for support with difficult topics.

#### Impact on specialism

The project has definitely enriched the partnerships between our school and its feeder primaries. It has raised awareness of the Science specialism in the community.

## **Top tips**

Have regular meetings with your partners. Ideally we would like to meet during the school day and despite offering to pay cover costs found primary colleagues reluctant to spend time away from their classes. We organise termly twilight sessions instead but these have to start at 4.15pm to allow time for travel. Given that these meetings are late on in the day we find that providing refreshments is welcomed. The planning for this project happened naturally because we had set up calendared termly Cluster Science Meetings when we gained Science Specialism in 2003. If you do not already meet regularly with partner primaries we can thoroughly recommend starting to.

## **The future**

This project was such a success that the maths and English departments here at St Peter's offered to come on board and extend the project. This year we have themed the project on 'STEM Innovations' and year 5 pupils have received cross-curricular input and enrichment.