'Reaching for Space' Mini space education project for primary feeder schools - The Sholing Technology College

Leading space education programme

Key actions

Using the platform of Leading space education programme it was decided to take one element of our programme and involve our three feeder primary schools. Following discussions between the design and technology department and primary schools at an inset day in spring 2009 we envisaged a mini space project with the title of '**Reaching for Space'**

The aims of the project were as follows:

- This project was aimed at years 5-6. With three sessions planned for the project. The first of the three sessions introduce the pupils to a taste of U.S manned space flight from the beginnings of the manned Mercury, Gemini, Apollo projects through to the ISS space station and a glimpse into the future with missions to the Moon and Mars with the new Ares spacecraft. This was via an electronic presentation with question and answers throughout. The focus then switched to how pupils could reach for space themselves by the designing, producing and launching of a water powered rocket design.

- The Materials and equipment with the exception of the 2L coke fizzy drinks bottle or similar were supplied by The Sholing Technology College. This also included a set of fin templates to assist pupils. The second session of designing and building the rockets was in-house at the respective schools.

- The final session was a launch event at the respective school with TSTC bringing in a purpose designed launch pad for the event.

The overall outcome for the primary schools was a mixture of a stand-alone mini project linked to space with elements of design, manufacture and science. The focus was to produce a series of fun lessons with a view to introducing the pupils to aspects of space flight linked to a practical design and technology project. To date we have run the project with the two primary feeder schools in 2009 and it is planned to include a further school in 2010.

Impact on lead and partners schools

In using the project 'Reaching for Space' we have introduced a practical D&T project linked to space education. We have used elements of design, manufacture and some CAD/CAM to produce a practical outcome with a fun theme of launching water powered rockets. It has produced an enrichment element to primary D&T and introduced the department of technology to both pupils and teachers. Primary pupils have particularly enjoyed the launch aspect of the project and have been enthused with the electronic presentation of U.S space flight.

Impact on specialism

As part of our technology specialism it has enabled us to strengthen our links with our feeder schools and to link with the primary curriculum and focus on a project they have been working on. It will reinforce their knowledge and understanding in a practical way.

Top tips

Establish links within specialist areas of feeder primary schools. At The Sholing Technology College we have run the space education theme using a design and technology project.

The future

We have strengthened our links with our primary feeder schools. Up to 2009 our department did not have a direct link into the feeder schools. Using the Leading space education programme we now have regular contact and we have been well received by pupils and staff. With this enrichment activity we have reached 120 pupils in feeder schools. It is envisaged to continue this activity into 2011 and beyond.

Contact at school

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Images from the programme