

we the curious

Curious Partner Schools Programme



About Us

We The Curious is an award-winning educational charity and science centre based in the heart of Bristol's harbourside, and the largest provider of STEM education outside the classroom in the Southwest. In a typical year we support 300,000 visitors and 75,000 school children.

Our aim is to make science inclusive for all, to build science capital and to make cutting-edge science relevant, accessible, and empowering. We do this through our curriculum-enhancing schools' program, interactive exhibits, environmental sustainability initiatives, volunteering, and outreach programs.

After years of disruption due to the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis we have seen how disadvantaged young people have been disproportionately impacted. Now more than ever, we are passionate about the role of creative experiences in overcoming disparity in educational attainment and engagement in STEM.

For example, in Bristol, there's a stark contrast in further education access, with 100% in affluent areas versus 8% in the most disadvantaged ward. 41 areas are in the most deprived 10% in England, including three in the bottom 1% in South Bristol (Bristol Council Key Facts 2023). Addressing these disparities is crucial.

Background

The Curious Partner Schools Programme will build upon highly effective pilots developed as part of our 'Open-Source Science' Programme see [Video](#). Pilots include - **Seagulls at Hannah More** see [Video](#), **Hareclive in Space** introduced children and space researchers to explore space topics, prototyping digital content, WTC exhibit and planetarium development and **Space science in a climate crisis** with City Academy in Easton, linked space science with social and environmental issues, challenging perceptions of STEM.

We know that young people need to be able to see themselves in a career before they will consider further study in that area but too many feel that 'science isn't for them' due to a lack of inclusive practice within STEM education, research and industry. This activity will form part of our efforts to evidence how curiosity-led, investigative learning values young people's identities and supports them to see STEM as relevant, accessible and a part of all our everyday lives rather than as something that is reliant on having 'natural talent' or a privileged background.

The Curious Partner Schools Programme

The 2024 – 2026 Programme will offer inspirational hands-on science learning opportunities (at We the Curious and within partner schools) and empower children to design and deliver their own environmentally-themed research. The 2 Primary Schools selected are located in communities which are experiencing some of the highest levels of social inequality in Bristol:

- **Hannah More Primary School** in Lawrence Hill ward which in the 2022 census was shown to have the highest level of child poverty in Bristol at 46.6% (Bristol Ave 21.8%) and is very diverse with 61.6% of students having English is an additional language.
- **Hareclive E-Act Academy** is located in the Hartcliffe and Withywood ward. The 2022 census showed the area to have the 3rd highest level of child poverty in Bristol at 34.1%. Hareclive is the 9th most deprived area in the UK out of 32,844, and the school has one of the highest level of Free School Meals in Bristol at 69% (the mean is 28.4%).

Programme Summary

We will aim to:

- Provide inspirational hands-on science learning opportunities at WTC (otherwise inaccessible due to financial barriers) and within partner schools.
- Empower children to design their own environmentally-themed research, with the support of diverse industry and academic experts. We will develop children's: questioning and investigative skills; their understanding of the research process; and expand their understanding of what science is, the skills you can develop and potential career opportunities.
- Increase children's understanding of environmental issues in their community and feel more empowered to take action as evidenced by the research findings and recommendations that will demonstrate their learning and skills development.
- Strategically develop the We The Curious inclusive school's program, deepening and building upon our relationships with partners which will support our goals to increase diverse participation in STEM.

Project Outputs:

- **620+ students will learn from and be involved with the 'Curious Partner Schools Programme'.**
- **350 students will receive free - transportation, entry to WTC, curriculum-matched school Workshop and Planetarium Show (150 - Year 1-3 Hareclive E-Act Academy and 200 Year 1-6 Hannah More Primary)**
- **Hands-on science activity in school for 50+ Reception children in Hareclive E-Act Academy**
- **Each school will be supported to design, shape and deliver an environmentally themed research project relevant to the needs and interests of the school community. This will include:**
 - ✓ *Introduction and Design of Research Project*
Whole School Assemblies: Interactive sessions to share project ideas and goals.
Facilitated Eco Groups and School Parliaments: Involvement of 40 children to shape research projects.
Expert-Led Workshops: Collaboration with community, academic, and business partners.
 - ✓ *Workshops and Community Engagement*
Class Workshops: Design, plan, and deliver the research project.
Community Engagement: Interaction with local stakeholders and parents facilitated by WTC.
Research and Evaluation: Conduct 4 workshops (2 classes of 25 children each) to deliver and assess findings.
 - ✓ *Presentation of Findings and Recommendations*
Facilitated Presentation Sessions: Eco groups and school parliaments design the presentation method for findings and recommendations.
Celebration Assembly: Host an assembly with key partners and stakeholders.
Project Documentation: Create a short film and documentation with WTC to inspire other schools

Funding and Timeline:

The programme will cost £50,000 a year (Full budget breakdown available on request). We The Curious can invest £23,000 towards the Programme Development, Delivery, Marketing, Coms, Filming and Evaluation. We have had £14,000 pledged by the Edina Trust towards Year 1 of the programme and a number of businesses interested in investing in Social Value Projects but this still leaves us with a shortfall.

Development work is being undertaken with the main Programme launching in September 2024 (more detail is available on request).

For more information:

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