



Sharing together

A community affair – the Bridlington way!

Lynne Bianchi talks to Kate Sutton about how she inspired a Bridlington primary science community through involvement in the Great Science Share for Schools (GSSfs)

What first motivated you to get involved in the GSSfs?

Participation at school has built over the years. At my school, Burlington Primary, we also wanted to change the misconceptions that science was an explicit lesson each week about making potions, and that all important scientists were old white men who are now dead! So, in 2018, our first year of involvement, the children 'Drew a Scientist', which was very enlightening – many drew gendered depictions of male stereotypical images of scientists. The pupils subsequently learned about different scientists, both men and women, and also started to understand about the wide range of STEM careers available to both males and females. They started, in a small way, to tackle

engrained gender/stereotyping issues and they investigated their own ideas about scientists and STEM jobs that interested them.

One of the principles I have tried to encourage in the school is that science is everywhere and we are all living science. I aimed to ensure that the children had opportunities to access a variety of contemporary professionals, including Bonnie Posselt (RAF doctor in Aviation and Space Medicine), John Shepherd (musician) and Dr. Carl Steele (Technology Manager at

Sellafield). I wanted them to see that science is NOW and this led me into wanting to grow the profile of science and join in with the GSSfs.

What impact has the GSSfs had on science learning in your school?

The greatest impact is that it has supported science being seen as

A festival of flowers

Close observation of the world around us!



Keywords: Community ■ Social media ■ Family engagement ■ Science share

Resources we used to inspire children to share science!

Explorify challenges

School science units of work that focused on animals, including humans (the circulatory system, health and the effects of exercise), plus Living things and their Habitats for Year 6 (age 11)

GSSfs Weekly Themes, such as the Scavenger Hunt and other challenges such as those tweeted by Dr. Alison Buxton and Maker Futures

GSSfs Question Makers – in particular, Questions Hands!

Pupils sharing science using Twitter made their GSSfs experience real and responsive

Although it did not go as we initially envisaged, we have certainly established stronger links with other schools, which will support future development of our work and the GSSfs.

Why is developing a community for science so important to you?

Developing a sense of community is so important in all areas of education, with the ultimate hope that it may enable children to hone key transferable skills such as collaboration, resilience and determination. As they progress towards their future selves through education, it is vital that learners are supported to undertake their learning journey in the most effective way and to maximise their learning. It would be brilliant to see their prospects enhanced through participation in such events at this younger age.

The togetherness was enhanced online through engagement with social media such as Twitter and the use of the #Bridlington hashtag. The Science Showcase on the GSSfs website was a welcome way for the schools to see their own work, and that of other schools and families across Bridlington. The range of work and the innovative way it was presented was encouraging, interesting and engaging. It would be such a positive to share best practice across this group of schools and enhance relationships further in the future, without the limitations of lockdown, of course!

How necessary was social media for your community growth?

Twitter is a great way to engage and it definitely supported us, and the website showcases, this year. It helped



very relevant and linked to the real world. For instance, in our second year with the GSSfs, we asked the children to choose a theme that they wanted to investigate. They chose plastic pollution, which created an abundance of activities to engage with, including writing to organisations such as the supermarket Morrisons (in our own town), as well as Theresa May (then Prime Minister) and Donald Trump regarding their worries over the plastic threat to our environment. The children were able to articulate their thinking and support this with the science knowledge they had learned. They felt as though they were helping to contribute to the solution of this worldwide issue.

On a more local level, they collected litter outside during break times, developed the garden area and planted trees, and also recycled plastic to make board games to play in class. They investigated and researched the issue locally, nationally and in a more global way – creating posters, assemblies, displays, taking part in beach cleans and the BBC *Blue Planet Live* lesson. This project

Can you tell us about taking the GSSfs beyond your school?

In 2020, I decided to focus on developing more of a primary science community across Bridlington and initially planned to put together a collective GSSfs event, where pupils from many Bridlington primary schools could interact. The children had already enjoyed making and developing links with Bridlington School and also Hilderthorpe Primary (through our STEM Enthuse Partnership involvement) and wanted to share more with friends and peers. Our plans had to change once COVID-19 hit, but that hasn't stopped us!

I took part in meetings via Zoom with the GSSfs team whilst working from home and communicated with many science subject leaders across Bridlington via e-mail with information about the GSSfs. I was so excited to see how many engaged and started to see ideas and plans coming together. Due to the fact that children were working from home, the GSSfs became an event that spanned weeks, linking with the weekly themes and combining lockdown activities developed with families at home that involved nature, daily exercise and curiosity.

carried on across the academic year; they were filming for this during Science Club, which they had planned and intended to share in a wider way online when lockdown hit.



What have the other teachers said about the impact in their schools?

Brandesburton Primary School's Great Science Share!

Karen Platten, Science Lead, shares her experience of the GSSfS:

I was made aware of the Great Science Share and was excited to take part. Due to the pandemic, it really suited our school's plan for using class home-learning blogs; in particular, the International Dawn Chorus theme relating to birds fitted really well with our Key Stage 1 (ages 5-7) theme. This aimed to get pupils out in their gardens and observing nature.

By far the most popular weekly theme was the 'World Oceans Day', which really caught the children's imagination and led to lots of pupils submitting their work electronically to their teachers so that we could submit it to the showcase. We were all excited to exhibit work from our school on the showcase and were delighted to be featured as 'school of day' at one point. We were able to make strong links to the science curriculum, such as Year 3 (age 8) 'Plants', 'All Living Things' in Years 4, 5 and 6 (ages 9-11), and also to working scientifically across the primary age range. It has been a very engaging experience for our pupils, especially during such difficult times, and helped to promote science in a fun way, which is just what was needed.



The GSSfS Question Makers supported pupils to ask questions

us to share in a broader way and allowed pupils at home or in school to have their work, ideas, activities or investigations shared. It was great to see people commenting, interacting and retweeting, therefore sharing, again in a wider way.

The immediacy of online and social media is a real advantage – allowing ideas to be shared quickly. For instance, the Question Makers on the GSSfS website are great for encouragement and engagement. After I tweeted the children's work, a teacher from another school commented about it to one of their colleagues, suggesting they should use the strategy across the curriculum at their school, and so the sharing goes on!

A surprising and really pleasing outcome, which added great excitement, was making connections within the community with families whose children attend other schools

in our area. Liam and Ollie (@NatureRambles) are part of an amazing family who live in rural East Yorkshire and enjoy what really seems like an idyllic time living and learning through nature. They attend one of the Bridlington schools and it was an utter privilege to see and share their adventures and to continue to do so. Nature is a wonderful thing, which sometimes feels lost on some human beings – not so with these boys. Thank you for sharing and supporting – I am inspired!

What I do see going forward is that, even when we are able to be physically together for a GSSfS event, using online and social media means of support adds another layer of depth to what we are doing.

What other things made this year's Great Science Share different for you?

Lockdown put a whole new spin on the GSSfS and we used Class Dojo as one means of communication with my Year 6 class, as well as the whole school. A number of pupils enjoyed taking part using the weekly GSSfS themes and posted their work and photos in the shared areas. These were shared across the school via Dojo, Twitter and the GSSfS Showcase page.

The increased engagement in nature, cookery, tinkering for learning, exercise and mindfulness at home became evident as 'home working' was shared – a lovely thing to witness

as an unexpected outcome of the pandemic. The SpaceX launch also enthused many pupils to get in contact and engage with science. We have a great link with Farmer Time, with Farmer Tom and our Farmer Colin, where the children loved to ask and see their own questions answered – they felt like VIPs in a much wider science community.

What are your next steps?

I am so happy with what was achieved this year during the GSSfS, particularly during a time of huge uncertainty, and proud to say that we've achieved a new way of working across schools. These relationships will be nurtured into the next academic year and we are looking forward to being able to build on that for GSSfS 2021 with, hopefully, an actual physical event in which the pupils from across Bridlington can participate together. Going forward, I'd like to continue to explore the focus on science careers and also the links with real-life themes, enabling children to develop their investigative, collaborative and making skills, as well as thoughtfulness as they develop their science capital, knowledge and community for the future.

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