



The SCI-FUN Roadshow 2011/12

We are delighted to announce that the SCI-FUN Roadshow will be once again travelling the length and breadth of Scotland delivering our science centre experience to early secondary school pupils.

Our continuation is due to the fantastic ongoing support of the University of Edinburgh, which is providing the majority of our core funding for 2011/12. Per visit, the University is providing a subsidy of approximately £3,500.

This is a significant commitment, and one which will make the Roadshow scheme much more affordable to schools: the visit fee for this academic year will be £300. This represents a large reduction from the £750 fee we were forced to charge in 2009/10. We realise that this remains a large figure for schools to find; more details on how we intend to reduce the visit fee



still further can be found in the section below: "Reducing the School Visit Fee".

The Roadshow scheme itself retains the same approach – the unique combination of hands-on exhibits and interactive presentations – which has worked so well over the past decade. Thanks to the feedback that we have received from schools in the past twelve months, it is clear that our range of hands-on activities is the most important aspect of SCI-FUN in supporting STEM education in schools. A summary of opinions is presented on the reverse of this newsletter.

SCI-FUN remains fully committed to reviewing all areas of our programme, so that we are able to meet the needs of teachers and pupils more closely. A few alterations will be made to our website, so that the most useful materials are more accessible. We are also developing more post-visit activities, related to the hands-on exhibits, which will extend the impact of our scheme. We know many teachers already work with pupils on the concepts we present, and these new materials will provide additional support.

Over the past year, in addition to requesting views from teachers, SCI-FUN has also undergone a thorough HMIe inspection to gain an independent assessment of the effectiveness of our work. This has identified many key strengths of the SCI-FUN scheme; as a result



we have been awarded a grant from the Scottish Government to support our ongoing plans.

We are currently developing our schedule for the 2011/12 academic year, with the aim of producing a coherent sequence of visits. If you would like to make arrangements for SCI-FUN to visit your school, then please look at our website www.scifun.ed.ac.uk for more details, and contact us at scifun@ed.ac.uk.

Reducing the School Visit Fee

The fee for a visit (including up to four sessions over two days) is £300, reduced from £500 in 2010/11. We have taken this important step partly in response to the feedback that we have received, but also due to the interest level in the Roadshow remaining strong, and the visit fee preventing a number of schools from taking their interest in a visit any further.

In spite of this fee reduction, we understand that £300 is still a lot of money, given the shrinking budgets that we all face.

We are therefore continuing our efforts to support the visit fee by approaching external groups to provide an additional subsidy. Over the summer we made a follow-up proposal to

the Holmes Hines Memorial Fund with the aim of obtaining additional funding for schools. They subsidised six visits in the last academic year and they are interested in supporting visits again in 2011/12.

We are particularly focusing our efforts on pilot schemes with partners, like OPITO (The Oil and Gas Academy), in the north-east of the country. Therefore, we would especially like to hear from schools in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Angus who would be interested in a SCI-FUN visit, as this would be useful in assessing the scale at which these pilot projects could operate.

There is also a list of funding options for teachers to approach on our website. We are maintaining

this list, but we are always interested in further advice, so please send in any options that we may have missed to scifun@ed.ac.uk.

We are continuing to develop relationships with a number of potential funding sources in order to improve the Roadshow programme and support our plans for future years. We are always interested in hearing from companies and funding groups that would like to explore ways in which we could collaborate effectively for the benefit of science education in Scotland. Please email us at scifun@ed.ac.uk if you would like to discuss our organisation, and the potential for working together.

A Summary of Feedback in 2010/11

As many outreach providers will know, it is difficult for groups such as SCI-FUN to find a suitable way in which to measure their success: raw numbers – such as school visits and pupil head-count – can only ever be part of the answer.

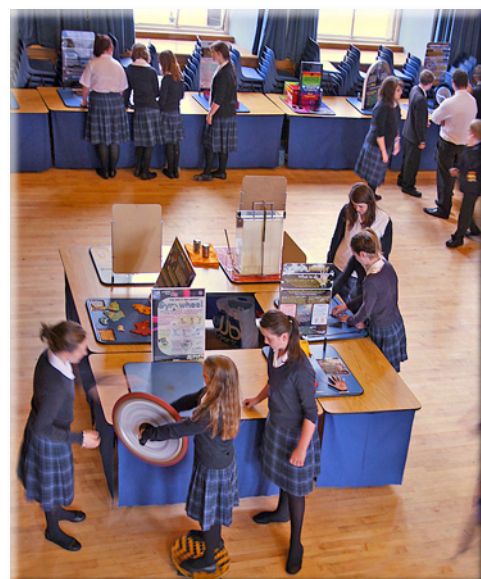
This is why feedback from teachers, pupils and parents is so important to us: it lets us know which parts of the Roadshow are working, and which parts to change. This is the second year in which we have undertaken this type of exercise, and it is proving to be extremely useful in determining how effective we are in supporting STEM subjects in school, and how we can continue to improve. The executive summary report is now available on our website, with two key aspects to highlight. All of the respondents:

1. indicated that the hands-on activities were the best part of the Roadshow scheme; and
2. would want a repeat visit, and would recommend the project to other teachers.

The first statement is particularly striking, since we asked the question without options from which to select an answer; it is clear that the hands-on activities are an important element of the SCI-FUN project, and are vital in supporting science education in each venue we visit.

We also received a few suggestions for improvements that would further support teachers. With these in mind, we will produce a new area on the website that guides teachers through the booking process – including a new checklist to ensure that every aspect has been covered. Within this area, there will be information about every aspect of the Roadshow – presentations and exhibits – and the link they have with the *Curriculum for Excellence*.

A few of the messages we have received in 2010/11 are shown below; we are grateful to all those who provided their opinion of the Roadshow in the past year.



Feedback from Schools for Session 2010/11

“Another outstanding visit from the SCI-FUN team! Our S2 pupils were both amazed and enthralled by the slick presentation and engaged enthusiastically with the practical activities. SCI-FUN has an intrinsic place in helping to promote the choice of two (or even three) sciences here at Bearsden Academy as our presentation statistics bear out. S2 pupils leave the event enthused for the sciences and our senior pupils also benefit from the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities as confident individuals and successful learners.”

– Richard Ford, PT Physics, Bearsden Academy, East Dunbartonshire

“One of the most useful presentations we have had in the school. Pupils really enjoyed the hands-on exhibits and are already asking when the Roadshow is coming back. Excellent in raising awareness and addressing the importance of science and subject choice.”

– Dr Rob Campbell, PT Chemistry, Lossiemouth High School, Moray

“Having recently taken a group of pupils to the Science Centre, SCI-FUN offers as much impact for substantially less cost per pupil.”

– D Dalgleish, PT Physics, St Augustine's RC High School, Edinburgh

“I can't wait to do science.”

– P7 student, Kinlochbervie High School, Highland

“SCI-FUN is a very positive experience for S2 pupils. It allows us to discuss science as a whole school and gives a view on science outside school that can be difficult for teachers to do. It is extremely professionally presented. The organisation of the event prior to the visit is so smooth that it makes it very easy for me to organise in school. The presenters are very good and work very well with our pupils. They are terrific. We fully support the SCI-FUN Roadshow and think that all S2 pupils would benefit from the talks and hands-on activities.”

– Liz Anne Jaffray, PT Physics, St Ninian's High School, East Dunbartonshire

“S1 participants gained hugely from the Roadshow in terms of Science content and also from their interaction with senior pupils and SCI-FUN staff.”

– Jane Parker, PT Science, Bell Baxter High School, Fife

“Hands-on practical sessions and thought-provoking presentations. I would like to thank SCI-FUN for coming to the Western Isles and putting on an excellent show that was greatly enjoyed by all.”

– Hamish Budge, Education Support Officer, Eilean Siar

“Absolutely professional and highly recommended!”

– S Sutherland, PT Science, Kinlochbervie High School, Highland

“As always – very professional. SCI-FUN is an excellent showcase for science and, as society demands more of the subject, it would seem to be sensible that projects such as this should be permanently centrally funded. The new ‘hands-on’ displays looked good! Thanks to the team.”

– Ian Haining, Tynecastle High School, Edinburgh

“Extremely worthwhile experience, pupils are enthusiastic and in awe of some of the Science experiences.”

– Allison Henderson, PT Science, Ullapool High School, Highland

“Don't think you should try to change it. If it isn't broken... A great job, well done.”

– Anthony Tuffery, Depute Headteacher, The Nicolson Institute, Eilean Siar

“An enjoyable and well-organised Roadshow that made good use of the senior pupils. The time for each part of each session was perfect, holding the interest of even the restless pupils. Thanks.”

– Science Coordinator, Clackmannanshire

“If they had events like this when I was at school I might not have studied a second language.”

– A Christie, PT Modern Languages, St Augustine's RC High School, Edinburgh

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