



## **Promising results for Year 10 pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds through STEM Learning's innovative Science Summer Schools**

Feedback from a set of four innovative science summer schools developed and delivered by STEM Learning during August 2020 in Harlow has demonstrated promising results for engagement and feedback from participants.

Participants were all from Year 10, with disadvantaged backgrounds and operating at GCSE Level 4 or 5. They attended a three-day intensive face-to-face programme to help deepen and strengthen the core of scientific knowledge essential to their future GCSE success.

The summer schools were carried out to plan and with no issues. Attendance was excellent and participation was superb. Each day had five hours of tuition and participants remained engaged throughout, reporting back that they had found the summer schools very useful.

Three design elements were particularly successful and should be included in any future programme:

- Lessons were led by exceptional, inspirational subject-specific teachers who would not normally teach the participating pupils
- Each day had a subject-specific emphasis
- Class size was restricted to a maximum of 20 pupils

There was plenty of flexibility in design and logistics to enable teacher-led selection of participants, fine-tuning of subject and content emphasis, choice of timing and ability for local teachers and others to offer support.

STEM Learning designed and developed the summer schools in response to research findings that the six-week summer break can negatively impact the educational attainment of children, especially those disadvantaged by difficult living situations or with limited access to informal learning opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent school closures are likely to worsen this impact and, as STEM Learning is committed to providing a world-leading STEM education for all young people in the UK, we wanted to develop a practical intervention to reduce that attainment gap.

We will be tracking the educational impact for the Harlow participants with their schools over the coming academic year. We also look forward to sharing results from future programmes.

STEM Learning operates the National STEM Learning Centre and Network, alongside other projects supporting STEM education [www.stem.org.uk](http://www.stem.org.uk)