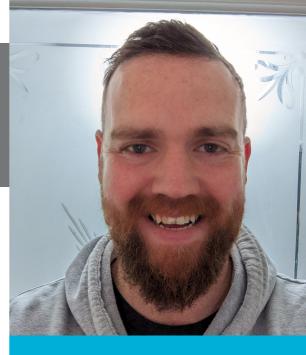# Digital resources case study: Bob Dunn

CREATING AN INSPIRING PRIMARY SCIENCE PROGRAMME

Digital resources enhance learning

Bob is a primary school teacher at St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School in Newcastle upon Tyne. Bob has been the science lead at the school for the last seven years. "I don't have a scientific background; I studied geography at university. Whilst there is some overlap, I didn't specialise as a science teacher. I enjoy being the science lead. If I moved on to another school in the future, I'd try and get involved with the science as much as possible."

"I first came across STEM Learning through a CPD course at the local museum. They introduced us to STEM Ambassadors and then the digital resources. Whenever I am planning lessons, I always go to see which activities we could use. Then they are embedded into the school's planning so that all the teachers have access to them for their classes, so you're not starting from scratch each year. The weekly emails are brilliant for ideas too or for learning about STEM events."

"In the last couple of years, it's been quite hard because a lot of learning was done via Zoom or Google Classroom. You can show the children videos but they've missed being in a room investigating and being hands on. I've been trying to find resources that plug any gaps and help the children catch up their knowledge."

Lockdown learning

"During the first lockdown I used the STEM Learning website a lot because they very quickly had lots of relevant home learning activities. I just wanted them [the pupils] doing some science, anything! It didn't have to be formal, just what can you do whilst you're at home with your family?

Luckily, it was good weather, it was spring. The children could do some planting or look for changes in nature on their daily allowed walk. Anything to get them thinking about science and talking about science. We got loads of really good photos, videos and emails back from parents saying how much they loved getting involved."

STEM careers

Bob has been proactive in offering his pupils the opportunity to learn more about STEM careers, something they haven't been able to do as much of in person since the pandemic began. Online resources have helped illustrate different 'real life' scientists and engineers through videos and activities.

"At my school we like to say that scientists aren't all white bearded blokes in a lab coat! We want the kids to see scientists and engineers can be anyone and everyone. Before the pandemic, inspired by the STEM Learning resources, we had a jobs fair.

We involved parents working in STEM and got in touch with STEM Ambassadors via the [STEM Learning] website. All the people that came brought exciting activities or equipment from their job and the kids loved it."

Increasing confidence

As well as supporting his colleagues with lesson planning, STEM Learning's online resources have helped Bob increase his knowledge and improve his confidence in science teaching.

"I haven't got a science background. I feel like I've got a decent knowledge now. But that's because I've been doing it for years. Sometimes there are topics that I really don't know much about, like this year, I've just started teaching evolution and inheritance for the first time in year six.

When I was preparing, I realised I didn't know enough about the topic. I found a lot of resources on the website that helped me understand it, which then boosted my confidence. That meant I could teach the class without hesitation, and I enjoyed it, it's a really good unit to do."

Taking science home

"The kids enjoy the activities and always seem very engaged in science. All the resources are age appropriate. So, if I ever show them part of the website, or some pictures or slides, it's definitely suitable for them.

I've used the resources to send ideas home to parents and kids if they want to do a bit more at home, and I've always had a good response, so it's obviously easy for parents and kids to follow at home."