

February 2019

Pupils are STEM champs of Scotland's classrooms

Primary pupils are becoming teachers in classrooms across Scotland to develop their skills for learning, life and work.

More than 22 schools in Angus, Aberdeenshire, Moray and Highland are taking part in the STEM Champs programme run by the Raising Aspirations in Science Education (RAiSE) programme and Aberdeen Science Centre. Children in Primary 5 to 7 are devising STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) learning experiences for pre-school and Primary 1 and 2 pupils in a bid to secure STEM Champion awards.

Gayle Duffus is National Education Officer of RAiSE, a programme designed to improve the teaching of STEM in Scotland which is delivered and funded by The Wood Foundation, Education Scotland, Scottish Government and participating local authorities.

She said: "Putting the power into the hands of the upper primary pupils is a really impactful way for them to not only learn about STEM but to develop an array of skills including leadership, communication and organisation. It is also very engaging for the younger children."

In total, more than 750 pupils are taking part in the STEM Champs pilot. If successful, there are plans to introduce the programme nationwide.



The lessons can be bespoke depending on the in-classroom learning or from a prepared STEM Champs resource. The older pupils receive training from Aberdeen Science Centre and work towards Discovery or Challenger awards. Each school must deliver at least four STEM Champs lessons.

Dr Kim Aplin, Headteacher at Cairney Primary School, Aberdeenshire, said: "The children at both ends of the school have really embraced this experience. As well as being a lot of fun, it has really cemented their STEM learning and increased their confidence."

There was a competition held to design a logo for the programme which was won by a pupil from Greenwards Primary School in Elgin. They were presented with STEM-themed prizes including a family pass for Aberdeen Science Centre and a STEM kit. STEM Champs was developed from the Science Champs programme which was created by Aberdeen City Council and delivered in partnership with Aberdeen Science Centre since 2012.

Liz Hodge, Chief Executive at Aberdeen Science Centre, said: “We were delighted to be work with schools in Angus, Aberdeenshire, Moray and Highland who took part in the STEM Champs programme run by RAiSE. This gave ASC the opportunity to support pupils to inspire and enthuse younger pupils in their school with engaging, fun STEM activities whilst helping them to develop their own leadership, planning and communication skills.”

RAiSE is active in local authorities throughout Scotland. Primary Science Development Officers deliver teacher training, organise events, develop networks, align STEM with other priorities and signpost opportunities across their region to improve the confidence and competence of primary teachers in delivering STEM in their classrooms to ensure a higher quality of STEM learning, engagement and experiences for primary children.