

CREST Awards partnership: project report December 2022

The following report outlines the work that the funding from Mewburn Ellis – a donation of £40,000 in November 2021, towards the British Science Association's (BSA) CREST Awards programme – has achieved.

1. Supporting schools and teachers

We know that funding is just one of the barriers for teachers when considering delivering CREST Awards with their students (the first year of our partnership aimed to address this concern, by providing free CREST Awards and small grants for schools).

At primary schools particularly, additional barriers include lack of teacher time and confidence (only 5% of primary school teachers have a science background). Therefore, one of the key aims for our project this year was to provide more effective support for teachers from schools in Mewburn Ellis' four areas, in addition to providing free CREST Awards.

To do this, we undertook a number of activities:

1.1 Webinars

We held a series of three webinars in March 2022. The purpose of these were to introduce primary teachers to CREST, to provide guidance on running the scheme during lessons or after school, and to demonstrate a number of activities.

The webinars were free to attend and were publicised to teachers who had shown interest in CREST during the first year of our partnership with Mewburn Ellis. We also promoted the webinars more widely to our CREST Underrepresented Audiences Network (teachers from schools in challenging circumstances and those with high proportions of students from backgrounds currently underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM)) and via the [March issue](#) of our monthly Education newsletter.

Ninety primary teachers registered to attend the three webinars. Once the webinars had been streamed, we edited the footage to produce short 'Introduction to CREST Star/SuperStar' videos. These have received almost 70 views to date.

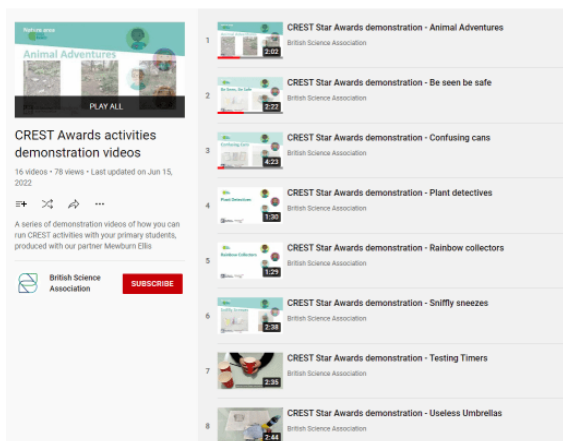
1.2 Special collection of resources

While funding is not the only barrier to uptake of CREST Awards in school, it is still an issue and we know that school budgets are ever stretched. However, there are lots of CREST activities that require relatively little complicated kit or equipment, and can be delivered using the type of resources typically found in classrooms.

We created two special resource packs – one for Key Stage 1 (CREST Star) and one for Key Stage 2 (CREST SuperStar) – which featured only low-resource activities.

We published these packs in June 2022. They were uploaded to the CREST resources library, and publicised via the BSA and CREST digital and social channels. For example, [this news piece](#) on the BSA website and a [feature in the July edition](#) of our Education newsletter.

To date, the resources have received over 5,000 (5,493) downloads.



To coincide with the resource collections being published, we edited the webinar footage to produce 16 individual films – each demonstrating one of the activities from the two packs. These demonstration videos have, to date, received over 1,000 views (1,168).

Since the publication of the resources and videos, we have regularly promoted these from the CREST Awards social media platforms (examples from the CREST Twitter account, below).



2. Employee engagement

“Very rewarding. It was fantastic to be able to share some advice with the students about careers, IP and STEM. It felt like an event that truly inspired the kids.”

Mewburn Ellis employee, London

“I really enjoyed presenting and really just learning about STEM and how it can be applied in a real-world setting. I also liked working as a team.”

Discovery Day student, London

We designed and delivered two Discovery Days, at Mewburn Ellis' London and Manchester offices, in partnership with two of our CREST Regional Support Coordinators (Michelle Dow and Cerian Angharad).

CREST Discovery (typically for students aged 10-to-14) is a great first introduction to project work and helps students develop teamwork and hands-on investigative skills; they work in small groups to solve a STEM challenge. Students complete a Discovery 'passport' as they make their way through the day, to reflect on their experience, and present their work at the end of the day to receive their certificates.

Using the CREST 'Sustainable Solutions' Discovery Day resource as the starting point for these, we slightly tailored the content to highlight Mewburn Ellis' Green IP report.

Prior to each of the Discovery Days, we ran a training session for Mewburn Ellis colleagues, aimed at helping them get the most from the day.

The first Discovery Day was held at the London office on 15 June. Twenty nine students from the Ursuline Academy in east London. The second Discovery Day was held at the Manchester office on 29 November. Twenty four students from Abraham Moss Community School attended.

Student feedback revealed an overwhelmingly positive connection with the day. Students reported that their understanding of sustainable products and services had improved; and that their interest in thinking about a career in STEM had increased.

- 97% of London and 100% of Manchester students said they enjoyed the Discovery Day.
- 83% of students from both London and Manchester said they enjoyed meeting colleagues from Mewburn Ellis.
- 83% of students from London and 75% from Manchester said that the day had improved their understanding of sustainable products and services a lot, and 17% / 25% said their knowledge had improved a little.
- 52% of London students reported thinking about a career in STEM before the event, rising to 62% after the session; while 24% said they were maybe thinking about a career in STEM before the event, rising to 31%. For the Manchester students, 24% said they were thinking about a career in STEM before the event, rising to 32% after; and 14% said maybe, rising to 42% after.

Students also really enjoyed working with the Mewburn Ellis colleagues:

“My favourite parts were planning our idea, talking to Karolina about her life ,and watching other people's presentations.”

“The best part was meeting the members of Mewburn Ellis (especially Toby and Richard) as well as talking with them.”

“We all got to work together and enjoyed meeting the people from Mewburn Ellis. I got to learn more and it helps in geography.”

“We got to experience how people in real life would make their products/apps. The best part of the day was presenting our product because it was fun seeing what everyone thought about it.”

“Being able to express my ideas in a way that can help me and others in a future situation, but also listening to the people of Mewburn Ellis to help my decisions.”

Importantly, the event was also a success with the Mewburn Ellis colleagues who participated:

- 100% of Mewburn Ellis colleagues – from both London and Manchester – who completed our post-event feedback survey, said that they found participating in the day enjoyable.
- 100% (across both offices) also said they were more confident in working with young people in an education context, after having participated in the Discovery Day



3. Next steps

We are pleased with the success of the project this year. The donation from Mewburn Ellis has supported hundreds of teachers from schools in Bristol, Cambridge, London and Manchester, and beyond – with the potential of improving STEM education for many hundreds of students.