

Evaluation of Explorify - Interim report - June 2023

Executive Summary

Explorify is a free digital resource of engaging creative science activities for primary teachers, created by the Wellcome Trust and launched in 2017. It is designed to stimulate curiosity, discussion and debate in primary classrooms. In 2021, the responsibility for the management, continued development and delivery of Explorify was transferred to STEM Learning and the Primary Science Teaching Trust (PSTT).

The uptake and reach of Explorify has continued to significantly increase across the UK since STEM Learning and the PSTT assumed management of the resource, with 97,500 registered website users at the end of May 2023. STEM Learning and PSTT have successfully upheld the Explorify brand since taking on responsibility for its management and development, maintaining a suite of high-quality resources that have demonstrable impacts on educators and pupils. Resources are used extensively both in and outside of science lessons by educators who are passionate about the resource and its potential for teacher and pupil development, and actively promote it to others.

Evaluation approach

STEM Learning and the PSTT commissioned CFE Research to carry out an evaluation of Explorify to explore its impact on children and educators and to inform future development of the resource. An online survey for teachers, science leaders, senior leaders and home educators across the UK was disseminated during the first phase of the evaluation between December 2022 and April 2023, and achieved 598 responses. Depth interviews were carried out with six science leaders and two Explorify Champions.

Key findings

- **94%** of educators would recommend Explorify and promote its use both within their schools and via primary science networks.

[Explorify] is easy to use, it's easy to advocate for and it's easy to recommend it for planning purposes because it is so simple to use.

Science Leader

Pupil impacts

- **93%** of educators reported Explorify positively impacted their pupils.
- Educators reported that children's engagement in science lessons has increased:

96%

agreed Explorify has encouraged children to engage in discussions.

90%

agreed it has encouraged children to ask more questions.

81%

agreed children enjoy science lessons more.

Explorify breaks down barriers. It isn't 'don't put your hand up until you know the right answer'; there's none of that with Explorify. It encourages children to take part.

Science Leader

- Children's science skills have also improved because of using Explorify:
 - **81%** agreed that children make connections between science and their everyday lives more easily.
 - **75%** agreed that children's science knowledge and scientific vocabulary has improved.
 - **73%** agreed that children's scientific reasoning when answering questions has improved.
- Educators reported **enhanced wider skills** among children because of using Explorify:

75%

agreed children's confidence has increased.

70%

agreed children's oracy skills have improved.

- Explorify is an inclusive resource that can equally benefit children of all backgrounds and abilities. Educators also reported that it can have more positive impacts on some pupil groups:

34%

reported more positive impact on SEND children.

31%

reported more positive impact on children below the national average achievement in literacy.

24%

reported more positive impact on children from disadvantaged or deprived backgrounds.

21%

reported more positive impact on children who have English as an additional Language (EAL).

Impact on educators' teaching practice

- **93%** of educators reported that Explorify has positively impacted their teaching practice.
- **89%** of educators agreed they encourage children to take part in class discussions about science more frequently because of using Explorify.
- **72%** agreed they encourage children to predict what will happen when they do a science investigation more frequently.
- **69%** agreed that they enjoy teaching science more.
- **64%** agreed that they feel more confident teaching science.