

Can your team build a rover fit to explore Mars?

“Our partnership started with a visit by engineer to all four schools in the cluster. This proved eye-opening and motivational to the children. The STEM Ambassadors were on hand in the run up to the observatory event when teams of children from the four schools came together to test their Mars Rovers over different types of simulated Martian terrain, and also take part in a parachute constructing challenge for the lander. At the different schools, there were different timescales and groups involved in the project – but we all did it and every school produced its own rovers. There were mixed ages involved and it was particularly good to mix the schools up into new teams for the parachute-making challenge. We all agreed that the day had been a great success but that is certainly not the end of our partnership...We’re meeting again in the Spring Term with a plan to hold a stargazing camp/sleepover, possibly at the observatory, in late spring. The logistics of four schools and at least as many STEM Ambassadors has been a challenge, in terms of sharing their time and skills across the cluster. We’re now trialling a new idea, which is to use WhatsApp as a point of contact between the ambassadors and the four science leaders. This way, a teacher only needs to tell one of us they would like a STEM Ambassador’s help and we can quickly see if they’re available. Trying to set up a rota round the four schools was a reasonable idea but – owing to the ever-changing commitments of our ambassadors – it was never going to work as well.” **Lead project teacher**

“The children loved the challenge of using and applying their scientific knowledge acquired. It was made all the more enjoyable by working with and making new friends from the community”. **Head teacher**

“Our whole school community really engaged with [the STEM partner’s] assembly - we totally over ran our assembly slot as so many children wanted to ask her questions after her talk. The girls seemed particularly engaged to see a woman designing and building bridges and tunnels! Very inspiring”. **Project teacher**