

How did the stickleback lose its spines?

“The Royal Society Partnership Grant has provided both staff and pupils with a broad based experience which has involved Education, Science, Local Environment and Island culture. Pupils have been tasked with investigating ‘Why did the Stickleback lose its spines?’ Their investigation into this has allowed them to begin to develop an understanding of the richness and interdependence of the various elements of the natural environment of their island. Key scientific skills being taught and developed are: formulating hypotheses, analysing data, making direct observations and drawing conclusions.

Having the support of our STEM partner a highly qualified and knowledgeable scientist in this field has been invaluable to the project. Pupils and teachers have had the unique opportunity to acquire the skills of scientific enquiry rooted in and relevant to their local environment. Working with [the STEM partner] has enabled teachers to become aware of the skills and competences required in the field of scientific study and research.

The purchase of an aquarium that will be stocked with sticklebacks from our local area will allow pupils to continue their investigations, and educate further generations of both pupils and the community about the uniqueness of the North Uist sticklebacks.” **Lead project teacher**