British Science Week new school funding 2027

FAQs

Updated September 2026

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Planning an eligible event or activity (for British Science Week or otherwise)

Do my British Science Week activities have to follow the theme of the year?

No, there is no obligation for your plans to follow the 2027 'Creativity' theme and your applications for a Curiosity Grant or Explore Kit Box will not be judged on whether your event/activity is aligned with the British Science Week annual theme. While we hope you find the themed resource packs helpful, you are free to choose your own theme or repeat a successful activity from a previous year.

Do my planned activities have to take place during British Science Week?

No, it is not a requirement for the planned event/activities for which you are seeking funding to take place during British Science Week 2027 (5-14 March 2027), although we encourage your school to get involved in the Week. The funding can be used to support activities taking place throughout the academic year although not for events or activities that have already taken place. Funded activity must be completed by 31 July 2027.

Why are the Kick Start Grants no longer available?

As a charity, we at the British Science Association are supported by other organisations to deliver our programmes. Our funding to offer Kick Start Grants came to an end in 2026.

We are delighted to offer the Curiosity Grant and Explore Kit Boxes in 2027 as part of a wider six-year programme - funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) - to engage the public with research and innovation across the UK. During this first year, some activity for this new programme will be delivered through the established annual British Science Week campaign - taking place from 5-14 March 2027.

What do you mean by 'researcher'? / What is a researcher?

Researchers are people who use evidence, inquiry, investigation or specialist

knowledge to better understand issues and generate new insights. They may work in universities, research institutes, charities, community organisations, public services, industry, or as independent practitioners.

Researchers might include:

- Academic researchers and lecturers from universities.
- PhD students and Early Career Researchers.
- Scientists and engineers.
- Social researchers and evaluators.
- Healthcare researchers and public health specialists.
- Environmental and climate researchers.
- Historians, archaeologists and heritage researchers.
- Arts and humanities researchers.
- Independent researchers and consultants.
- Data analysts and citizen science specialists.
- Researchers working in charities, local authorities or.
- public bodies.
- Industry-based researchers and innovation professionals.

The Curiosity Grant

I work in a primary school. Can I apply for a Curiosity Grant?

Yes, you can apply if your planned activities/event meets the priorities of the Curiosity Grant and your needs cannot be met by an Explore Kit Box. If your plans involve working in cooperation with a secondary school, it would be more appropriate for your partner school to apply, as secondary schools and colleges will be prioritised for the Curiosity Grant funding.

What can the Curiosity grant money be spent on?

The Curiosity Grant aims to support schools to create opportunities for young people to engage with the skills, concepts, stories and people behind "research and innovation," and to build the school capacity to embed these experiences in everyday learning.

Although the nature of activities/events you plan with and for your students and other stakeholders will vary depending on your context, here are some suggestions and restrictions on how you can spend the Curiosity Grant:

Funding CAN be used for	Funding CANNOT be used for
• Equipment, materials and consumables (e.g. for student project work, Art/presentation project materials, design builds/models, etc.) • Travel costs for school trips and site visits for students • Travel and cover costs for school staff • Modest honorariums for visiting researchers, industry mentors, etc. • CPD for school staff • CREST Award application fees	• Competition prizes. • Large equipment such as tablets or microscopes. • Shows, trips, workshops or 'experiences' where the content is not directly related to learning about or undertaking research and/or innovation. • Equipment or consumables that are not essential to the delivery of the activities/event. • Salary or other normal running costs • Costs associated with an activity or event that has already taken place. • Costs already covered by other funding. • More than £100 on refreshments.

Can we use the Curiosity Grant funding to pay for a science show?

Only shows, trips, workshops or 'experiences' where the purpose is explicitly related to learning about or undertaking research and/or innovation with students are eligible for funding.

We are unlikely to fund an event where the whole grant will be used to pay for a commercial provider as it is not in the spirit of our priority of supporting young people to take the lead.

Further, we encourage you to consider how your choice of speaker(s) can introduce pupils to careers they might never have encountered before and demonstrate diversity in STEM. You might consider arranging a visit from a STEM Ambassador or inviting family members in who work in STEM or research professions. Take care that speakers do not inadvertently reinforce stereotypes that science is only for boffins/geniuses/professors. We want to fund activities that help young people see themselves as scientists and researchers.

Can we use the Curiosity Grant funding for a chick-hatching experience?

We know that chick hatching services – that provide an incubator and chicken eggs – are a popular choice for school groups. Similar to butterfly-rearing activities; they provide an opportunity for young people to get up close to animals and learn to make scientific observations. Ethical concerns remain, however, as to the appropriateness of a school setting as a hatching environment and about the aftercare of any hatched animals.

The British Science Association refers to CLEAPSS on all matters health and safety related. Their student safety sheets provide guidance on how to work in a safe and ethical manner in schools. All British Science Week activities and events are to be compliant with relevant legislation, and any

activities that are considered unsafe or unethical - including those that potentially cause harm or distress to animals - will not be funded.

In your grant application you should demonstrate your understanding of the relevant CLEAPPS advice on keeping and handling animals in science practical work and explain your rationale for selecting live animal handling compared to alternatives (e.g. live nest camera footage from reputable organisations).

What do you mean by the 'skills that underpin research and innovation'?

We recommend that educators support the development of transferrable skills used by those working in STEM-related jobs and help young people identify those same skills in themselves. We refer to the science attributes developed by NUSTEM as a starting point. These include:

- clear communicator
- collaborative
- committed
- creative
- curious
- hard-working
- imaginative
- logical
- observant
- open-minded
- organised
- passionate
- patient
- resilient
- self-motivated.

The Explore Kit Boxes

Can I apply for both types of Explore Kit Box?

Yes. The application asks which version(s) of the box for which you wish to apply; Explore Star is for learners aged approximately 5-7 and Explore SuperStar for those aged 7-11 or working at that level.

If your school would like to be considered for both types of boxes, please submit only one application, which may require that you collaborate with an/others at your school to submit the combined application.

Although influenced by the demand for boxes and numbers of applications submitted, it is unlikely that a school would be awarded both an Explore Star and an Explore SuperStar box in the same academic year as we seek to support as many schools as possible with our funding.

I am on a waiting list for a CREST Kit Box; can I get an Explore Kit Box instead?

To be considered for an Explore Kit Box you must submit an application by the application deadline.

Should your application be successful and your school is awarded an Explore Star or Explore SuperStar Kit Box, you will be removed from the corresponding CREST Star or CREST SuperStar Kit Box waiting list(s) (as the CREST and Explore kit boxes are very similar, containing the same eight CREST challenges).

If your application is unsuccessful your place on the CREST kit box waiting list(s) will be unaffected and you will be notified when more funded CREST kit boxes are available (which will likely be the 2027/2028 academic year).

I work in a secondary school. Can I apply for an Explore Kit Box?

Not this year, no. Although we recognise that secondary schools may wish to run practical activities for students working at the 7-11 year old level (or indeed as outreach with feeder schools), for this inaugural year that grants are offered we will only be awarding them to primary and special schools (including alternative provision).

My school already received a CREST kit box, is the Explore Kit Box different?

The eight practical hands-on challenges and associated equipment in each of the Explore Kit Boxes are the same as those in the CREST Star and SuperStar Kit Boxes. The Explore Kit Boxes contain some additional printed materials and guidance for schools to engage with research and researchers, however.

The application process

How much money can I apply for?

Only the Curiosity Grant is a cash grant, for £600.

Successful applicants for an Explore Kit Box will receive a physical kit of equipment and printed materials (including 60 CREST Award certificates). **There is no cash award with the kit box.**

What will I be asked for in my Curiosity Grant application?

You will need to complete the application using the online platform. **We do not accept applications sent as email attachments.** We recommend that you draft your application offline and submit it only once you have all the required information to hand. There is a downloadable template you can use offline to prepare your application and is available in the application platform.

You will be asked to provide the following information in your application:

Information about your school	• School name, address, including postcode • School reference number (URN, DofE, or SEED number) • Demographic information about the students at your school if you are eligible based on either the proportion of students that are eligible for PP/FSM or from ethnic minority backgrounds. We ask for the % of students. • School type (e.g. Primary, Special school, Alternative Provision, etc.)
Your contact details	• Your name and role • Your work email address
Your planned activities/event	• The objectives of your planned event/activities • A description of your planned event/activities; and how they meet British Science Association funding priorities • The expected audience of the event/activities (e.g. just students, students and families, etc.) • Total number of expected participants • An explanation of how you will support young people from groups more likely to be underrepresented in STEM to take part in the event/activities • An indication of any external organisations you intend to work with • A rough budget of costs associated with the event and how the grant money will be used
Financial details	• School's bank or building society account name, number, and sort code • The name and email address of your school/MAT/Local Authority Finance contact *Financial information is stored on a secure cloud-based service and will only be used to pay successful grant applicants. Unused details will be deleted. If the bank details supplied in your application are incorrect, the payment of the grant will be delayed and may result in the grant being withdrawn.

What will I be asked for in my Explore Kit Box application?

You will need to complete the application using the online platform. **We do not accept applications sent as email attachments.** We recommend that you draft your application offline and submit it only once you have all the required information to hand. There is a downloadable template you can use offline to prepare your application and is available in the application platform.

You will be asked to provide the following information in your application:

Information about your school	• School name, address, including postcode • School reference number (URN, DofE, or SEED number) • Demographic information about the students at your school if you are eligible based on either the proportion of students that are eligible for PP/FSM or from ethnic minority backgrounds. We ask for the % of students. • School type (e.g. Primary, Special school, Alternative Provision, etc.) • If your school has run CREST Awards before
Your contact details	• Your name and role • Your work email address
Your plans for the Explore Kit Box (You will be asked these questions for each type of box you are applying for – Star and/or SuperStar)	• When you are likely to do the CREST challenges with students (e.g. in lesson time, an extracurricular club, etc.) • Who will be involved in the CREST challenges (e.g. just students, students and families, etc.) • Total number of students you expect to engage in the project work • Other details on how you intend to utilise the box and support young people from groups more likely to be underrepresented in STEM to take part.
Any additional planned activities/event for young people engage with research and researchers	• A description of your planned event/activities; and how they meet British Science Association funding priorities • An explanation of how you will support young people from groups more likely to be underrepresented in STEM to take part in the event/activities • Total number of students you expect to engage in these additional activities

How are applications assessed?

Applications are assessed against eligibility criteria and against the funding priorities. Planned activities do not need to meet every funding priority/criterion but the strongest applications will meet multiple criteria.

As part of our approach to assessment, funding decisions will be made using a 'portfolio' approach. This means that in addition to assessing the eligibility and quality of individual

applications, we will consider the overall balance of the portfolio to ensure funding is distributed across school types (primary, secondary, alternative provision, special schools, etc.) and the four UK nations.

We will also be prioritising applications from schools that have not previously been supported by the British Science Association.

I am from a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Can I submit an application for British Science Week activities across more than one school?

We don't currently offer a multi-school application. Please apply as an individual school but let us know if you are working in cooperation with other applicants. On your application indicate which activities in the joint plan you are seeking funding for. Each linked application will be judged on its own merits and eligibility.

How do I check if my school is rural?

You can enter your school's postcode here https://www.ukpostcodecheck.com/ and check the census data. Any categorisation that contains 'rural' is eligible including:

- accessible Rural Area
- rural Hamlet And Isolated Dwellings
- rural Village area
- rural Town And Fringe area.

If you are unsure if your school qualifies as rural please email us, including your postcode, at bsw@britishscienceassociation.org.

Can I use AI to complete my British Science Week funding application?

Yes, you may use AI tools to help you write your funding application. We will not reject an application if AI was used.

However, AI-supported applications may not effectively represent the unique circumstances of your school and are often inadequate at describing what distinguishes your plans from similar generic approaches.

We encourage you to consider AI tools as a starting point and to further refine your application to demonstrably reflect your own experience and school context. Please ensure that your application is succinct and clearly explains what your plans are, how your event/activity meets British Science Association funding priorities, and that any budgetary information is specific and accurate.

What are the odds of my application being successful?

The Curiosity and Explore Kit Box Grants are new funding programmes from the British Science Association. As such, we do not know how many applications will be submitted for the 2026/2027 academic year.

By way of comparison, however, the Kick Start Grants available for schools for British Science Week 2025 attracted more than 1,100 applications and 150 grants were awarded.

We expect to award approximately the following in 2026/2027:

- 160 Curiosity Grants
- 100 Explore Star Kit Boxes
- Explore SuperStar Kit Boxes

All eligible schools that apply for an Explore Kit Box or Curiosity Grant will be welcomed as members to the Engage Teacher Network. So, even if your application is not successful this time you will have access to future opportunities including other funding, priority access to other offers, and the free annual Engage Teacher Conference.

Do you provide feedback on applications?

Due to the expected volume of applications, regretfully we will be unable to provide detailed feedback to applicants.

Consider attending a funding tips webinar or online drop-in to get advice before you submit your application: https://www.crestawards.org/about-crest/how-to-run/webinars