

Girvan Academy Science Fayre

At Girvan Academy, we have started to organise our annual Science Fayre to enthuse our learners about STEM subjects and boost the level of uptake within the school. The fayre is aimed at 3rd year and is held during Science Week in March, lasting from 8.50 am until lunch at 1:10 pm with a tea/coffee break at 10.25 am. It consists of 5 x 45-minute sessions where learners visit five labs.



On the day, we have a Biology laboratory where learners get to prepare a hanging drop slide to view protozoa and algae, dissect a chicken wing, view their internal organs using the virtual reality t-shirt and snack on some chocolate-coated insects.

The Chemistry laboratory has exothermic, endothermic and colour-changing experiments for learners to try, methane bubbles, elephant's toothpaste and the whoosh bottle demonstration.

The Physics laboratory has the motion chair, Van de Graaff generator, and other hair-raising demonstrations. There is a 'Career within STEM' room where local companies have generously provided staff to discuss and bring their careers within science to life. We have been fortunate enough to have had a paramedic, vet, biomedical scientist, beautician, Timstar sales executive, technical and development officer, and a Culzean Park Ranger participate in and support our previous events.



Our 5th Lab is an External Lab. We have been fortunate with this in previous years and have had support from the Strathclyde Science Scouts programme delivering their Genetics workshop. Our learners really enjoyed interacting with the students and asking about university life. We have also been fortunate to have the Galloway Forest Astronomical Society (GFAS) with its amazing 'dome' where the learners

are taken on a journey through space. This year due to Covid 19, the GFAS volunteers are not feeling confident at present to attend our event, so we have been emailing our local companies and universities, hoping to get support for this External lab event. If this doesn't come to fruition, we have a backup STEM lab idea.

As the sole Technician here at Girvan Academy, you can imagine just how much work and preparation this takes. Starting in January, I contact local companies asking if they could attend and support our event again, giving them an outline of what we do and what they can expect when they attend. The response from local companies is always tremendous, as they love to see what schools are doing to highlight STEM careers and want to lend their support.

The Senior Management Team at Girvan Academy support our event and contributes as much to the success as possible, ensuring timetables are amended. It is fully funded, and they take the opportunity to speak with the attending representatives to thank them for their ongoing support.

Closer to the date, after conversations with each department, I write up orders to ensure we have everything we require



for the event and start to prepare the trays needed for each laboratory. For the event to run smoothly, I have to prepare five separate setups for each subject and wheel one in as I take the previous away. This prevents any mistakes or crossover between sessions.

I use SSERC guidance for all of our Chemistry experiments on the day, weighing out everything I need on the days before. Any solutions that can be made up prior to the day are also prepared. I then write a step-by-step guide to what has to be completed on the morning of the fayre to ensure I don't forget anything. I have been fortunate in previous years to have support from other South Ayrshire Technicians and Science Staff members to help me prepare for the day. This is another good reason to have everything down on paper to ensure the sustainability of this highly valued event.

The feedback from the learners, staff and visitors is always very positive, and our learners see and do a lot in a short space of time. It is a lot of hard work for everyone involved, but it's the highlight of my school year at Girvan Academy, and I look forward to being involved in the planning of many more.

Lynn Morrison
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