Big Science Event

Frequently Asked Questions

**We’ve put together some answers to key questions on the Big Science Event at School. If you need further information and advice, see our website, book one of our twilight CPD sessions to get you started or you can always email us at competition@scienceoxford.com and we will get back to you as soon as we can.**

* **How do I enter my school?**

Register online at scienceoxford.com/big-science-event-at-school

* **When is the closing date?**

Register your school before 1st January 2021.

* **When should children carry out their investigations?**

Children can work on their investigations any time in the autumn or spring term. You have until 30th April to complete investigations and in-school judging.

* **How long should the investigations take?**

You can spend as much time on your investigations as you like. Some schools may spend several hours on their investigations over a number of weeks, others may focus on one afternoon, and others may integrate the investigations into a school science week.

* **When does judging take place?**

Judging will take place during May, so when you send us details of your winning team, we’ll ask you for any dates when your teams will be unavailable between Easter and the summer half term.

* **How much does it cost to enter?**

Entry is free!

* **How many teams can my school enter?**

If your school is single-form entry, choose one team from your school to go through to the cluster judging stage, when we will invite your team to present their work to our team of trained judges. If you are two-form entry, choose two teams, and so on.

* **How do we tell you about our children’s investigations?**

Towards the end of the Spring term, we’ll contact all registered schools and ask you to tell us the details of your school’s winning team(s).

* **How do you judge teams from EYFS to year 6 in the same competition?**

One of the key features of the competition is that children across the whole school can take part – often schools run the Big Science Event as part of a science day or science week throughout the school. When our judges hear about the work your school’s team(s) have done, they take into account the age of your children and consider their work against age related expectations for science, rather than against other teams. We’re not primarily judging the children’s presentation skills, but we’re interested in hearing all about the scientific investigation they have done.

* **Who are the judges?**

Our judges comprise members of Science Oxford’s Education Team, members of staff from one of our sponsoring companies, or teams of trainee teachers from our close relationship with Oxford Brookes University. All of our judges are provided with training and guidance to ensure consistency and fairness.

* **What prizes can we win?**

Thanks to our sponsors, the winning team will receive play equipment for their school from Playforce. Runners up will receive exciting science kits and every school taking part will receive a Big Science Event certificate.

* **When are the winners announced?**

All schools will be notified in June whether their team is invited to the final event, which will be held towards the end of the summer term at the Science Oxford Centre in Headington. Finalists will all be treated to a day of science activities including workshops, a show and time in our Exploration Zone.

* **How many children should be in a team?**

You can decide – the number of children in each team is flexible. We suggest no more than 6 children to ensure everyone is involved.

* **If children have freedom to choose their own investigations, how do I avoid chaos?**

**There are various ways to manage child-led investigations in the classroom to give children independence in designing their investigation whilst setting some boundaries to avoid chaos! For example, consider choosing a topic as a class, giving children a selection of materials and equipment to choose from, linking their investigations to a class topic, or setting a real-life scenario which poses a scientific problem. For more ideas, see our examples of questions from previous Big Science Events, or consider booking our Pupil Led Investigation twilight CPD session (free of charge as part of Science Oxford’s annual membership) – see scienceoxford.com/big-science-event-at-school/pupil-led-investigation**

* **How should children present their investigation?**

**Teams should produce a poster (or electronic document such as a Powerpoint presentation) about their investigation, then use this as a basis to talk to teachers and judges about what they have done. They are free to choose the format – it might include descriptions of what they have done, drawings, graphs, photographs, or even a collage of materials they have used. Our judges look forward to seeing the children’s posters!**

* **Where can I find out more?**

**If you still have questions, don’t hesitate to get in touch. Visit our website at scienceoxford.com/big-science-event-at-school/ or email us at** **schools@scienceoxford.com**

* **What happens if COVID-19 affects the judging and finals in 2021?**

**If lockdown restrictions or precautions for safe working due to COVID-19 prevent judges from being able to visit schools next year, we’ll adjust the event and may use video conferencing to allow schools to tell us about their winning entries. We’ll let registered schools know how we intend to do this. Similarly, if we’re unable to host our grand final event in person, we’ll arrange to contact finalists using video conferencing instead.**