


Cornerstones

Professor Brian Cox – a very modern scientist

Group:	Whole school
Key message:	Science is cool
Props:	<p>Assembly board</p> <p>Photograph of Professor Brian Cox in either the band Dare or D:Ream (available online)</p> <p>Recent photograph of Professor Brian Cox (available online)</p> <p>BBC clip <i>Seeing Andromeda</i> http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00fsyk0</p> <p>YouTube clip of D:Ream https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uSMctmG_o</p>

Engage

Show the children a photograph of a young Brian Cox in either the band Dare or D:Ream. Tell the children that one of the people in the photo is now one of the world's most famous scientists. Can they guess which one? Show a more recent picture and ask if the children know his name.

Develop

Brian Cox was born in 1968. From an early age, he had many hobbies and interests. He loved gymnastics and dancing and was a keen trainspotter. He also loved music. When he was 12, Brian read a book by an astronomer and scientist called Carl Sagan. This book inspired Brian to become a scientist, and in particular, a physicist.

Ask: What is a physicist?

The definition of physics is 'the study of energy and matter in space and time and how they are related to each other'.

Although Brian knew he wanted to become a physicist, he also loved music, and for a time, when he was a young man, he played keyboard in two bands – Dare and D:Ream. Although being in a band was very cool, he gave it up and now says that 'Science is the new rock and roll.'

Brian went to university and studied physics. He was a clever student, gaining several degrees. By the time he left university, Brian was a professor. After university, he began to do research, wrote books about physics and taught university students.



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He became very interested in the Solar System and astronomy, asking questions such as:

- Has the universe always been here?
- Will the universe last forever?
- Why do humans exist?
- Is there life on other planets?
- Can we time travel?

Brian has a favourite question, though: 'Why?' He is constantly curious, wanting to know why the things he sees are happening. He doesn't just want to discover new things; he wants to be able to understand and explain them.

Because Brian was very good at teaching and explaining very difficult ideas in ways that people could understand, he began to appear on television. He has made many programmes which explain how the universe works. It is these programmes that have made him famous and have inspired other people to become physicists or astronomers.

Show the BBC clip called *Seeing Andromeda*.

As well as travelling all over the world, making programmes about the universe, Brian also works at a very important scientific centre, CERN, where he is helping to discover new particles that may explain what the universe is made from. He is also very interested in climate change and works hard to educate people about this.

Innovate

Professor Brian Cox has tried to answer many questions about the universe. He is always asking questions, especially 'why' questions.

Ask: Have you got any 'why' questions about the world or the universe that you would like to find the answers? Invite suggestions from the children and record.

Express

Watch Professor Brian Cox as he performs with the band, D:Ream. Can they spot him playing the keyboard?