Supporting Teachers of Science in Scotland

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Since 2001 Scottish teachers have a new obligation to undertake 35 hours of Continuing Professional Development each year. Science education was made a national priority with significant investment in resources and training. The Royal Observatory Edinburgh, leading a consortium of nine organisations, was awarded £370k over two years to develop training workshops to support teachers teaching the Earth & Space curriculum (astronomy, geology, chemistry) to 5-14 year olds. The programme has trained some 400 teachers. More than 50 of these teachers have been trained to run the workshops in their local area. The programme has achieved excellent evaluation results. This success is based not so much on the programme’s science, as on its focus on approaches to learning and teaching and on the development of training skills – with potential lessons for many astronomy outreach programmes for schools.