

Experimental Research – Junior

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We were very pleased to have over 170 entries in this section this year from Year 7 and 8 students in predominantly metropolitan area schools. 11% of entries were awarded a Major Bursary, and 22% a Minor Bursary. 5% received a Distinction Certificate, and 29% a Merit Certificate. This means that a little over two thirds of all entries gained a merit rating or higher which is an excellent result. This is doubtlessly due to some really effective facilitation and engagement by Science teachers and family members out there. Well done, everyone! The topics chosen for investigation were, as always, awesomely creative and diverse. We all know that the hardest part of this process is initially getting the idea to investigate, and what ideas we found! Top quality entries investigated the psychology of music, the physics of elevators, the absorption of oil, how memory is affected, the elasticity of lolly snakes, the attractiveness of facial symmetry, the workings of a microbial fuel cell, and the question on everyone's mind – can we really grow food on Mars? This breadth of exploration shows that entrants this year really engaged and ran with the topic given.

Again, the success of the entry depended in part on how carefully the student had read the Handbook and how clearly they presented each part of the report. It was good to see Risk-Assess forms filled in thoughtfully.

Our thanks must go to our wonderful sponsors and the 18 judges who volunteered their time to assess the reports. Without them the STS would not be possible. The provision of online entry submission and judging promises a more efficient process in future years as we build on the experience we gained with its introduction this year.

We would encourage more teachers to be involved in judging and coordinating next year because we gain much more than we give in so many ways.