Cambridge Science Centre

Annual Review 2025

CAMBRIDGE SCIENCE CENTRE

A year of focus, clarity, and intent





Crafting awe-inspiring moments so that every child enjoys, explores, and shapes the world through STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)

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Solidifying our foundations for an ambitious future

Our people were our focus in 2025

2025 marked the first full year in which both our flagship Centre at Cambridge Science Park, and our Fenland Centre in Wisbech operated throughout the year.

With two permanent homes for hands-on, curiosity-driven and child-led STEM engagement, we turned our attention to strengthening the organisation behind them.



We invested in our people, reshaped our team and clarified the capabilities Cambridge Science Centre needs for its next phase of growth.

At the heart of this work is a simple framework for how we create impact:



We Partner



To Translate



To Engage

Mission Framework

This **'Mission Framework'** crystallised through the development of our new five-year strategy, created with and ratified by our Board of Trustees. It reflects both who we are and the extraordinary environment in which we operate.

Our home in Cambridge places us within one of the world's most significant innovation ecosystems, surrounded by pioneering science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Our team **partners** with industry, academia and communities to **translate** complex science and real-world innovation into accessible, relevant experiences that **engage** young people with the world of STEM and the opportunities it creates.

In doing so, we make the extraordinary science happening around us more visible, accessible and meaningful to the children and communities who live alongside it.

Cambridge Science Centre is not an isolated destination, but an entry point into the STEM world for everyone, especially those who may feel that it is not a space for them.



Message from our CEO



2025 was a year of focus, clarity, and intent for Cambridge Science Centre.

We took the time to step back and review some fundamental questions – who do we exist for, where do we add the greatest value, and how do we ensure our work creates lasting impact? This was not always an easy process, but it has been an important one.

The result is an organisation that is more aligned, more purposeful, and better equipped to deliver meaningful change.

Over the past year, we reached more than 39,000 children, families, and community members across Cambridge and Fenland through school visits, centre experiences, outreach activity, and community partnerships.

More importantly, we have continued building sustained relationships with the communities we serve, creating spaces where young people feel confident, curious, and able to see themselves in the world of science.

At the same time, we strengthened how we work. Our Partner, Translate, Engage Mission Framework now underpins everything we do, helping to ensure that the science shaping the world around us is not only accessible, but relevant and rooted in real lives and communities. This year also marked an important transition, from individual activities to sustained programmes: Building a Better Future focuses on the built environment, and this first programme of a planned series demonstrates the value of deeper, industry-informed engagement over time.

Our new five-year strategy has a clear ambition: to become a recognised centre of excellence with national influence.

This is not about growth for growth's sake, but about ensuring that more children, particularly those facing the greatest barriers, can access the opportunities created by STEM and feel that they belong within it.

The foundations are now firmly in place. What comes next is greater scale, depth, and long-term impact.We are only just getting started.

Rebecca Porter



Message from our Chair

2025 has been a pivotal year for Cambridge Science Centre, not defined by a single milestone, but by the clarity and strength of the direction that has now been set.

Following a period of significant growth, the organisation has taken an important step to consolidate and refine its model, ensuring that its work is not only impactful today, but sustainable and scalable over the long term, creating greater opportunities for young people.

The Board has been especially encouraged by the development of a clear strategic framework, underpinned by the Impact Architecture (Theory of Change) and a programme-led approach.

This provides a strong foundation for delivery, enabling Cambridge Science Centre to deepen its work within communities while strengthening its contribution to national conversations around STEM engagement, skills and inclusion.

The reach achieved this year, approaching 40,000 engagements, is impressive. More importantly, this reflects a shift towards sustained, relationship-led engagement with children and families who are too often excluded from opportunity.

This progress is a testament to the dedication and expertise of the executive team and staff, alongside the vital and continued work and support of our partners and funders. Together, they are ensuring that Cambridge Science Centre is not only inspiring curiosity, but helping to build confidence, capability and a genuine sense of belonging in STEM.

As we look ahead, the Board is very confident in the organisation's trajectory. With a clear strategy, strong leadership and an ever-growing network of partners, Cambridge Science Centre is strongly positioned to deliver lasting impact, both regionally and nationally.

Harriet Fear



Preparing for Growth



In recent years, demand for our work has grown. We have engaged more children, worked across more locations and developed a broader range of partnerships.

In 2025, our focus was on ensuring that this growth was purposeful, structured and sustainable, so that increasing our reach also increases the depth and quality of our impact. This included:

Reshaping the organisation to support delivery at scale, aligning capacity, capability and leadership with our ambitions.

Strengthening how we understand, measure and evidence impact through our Impact Architecture (Theory of Change).

Strengthening programme design and delivery, moving from standalone activities towards structured, repeatable and sustained engagement.

Clarifying the audiences we prioritise, with a sharper focus on children and communities facing the greatest barriers to STEM engagement.





Our new structure created clearer ownership across three connected areas of work:

Business Development

Builds and stewards relationships with industry, funders and strategic partners.

Programmes and Impact

Translates complex science into structured, evidence-led content, ensuring quality, coherence and measurable impact.

Operations and Engagement

Brings this work to life, ensuring that our experiences reach and resonate with the children and communities we serve.

Together, these workstreams create a connected system from **partnership development** and **programme design** – through to **delivery** and **engagement**, providing clearer ownership, and strengthening our ability to deliver sustained, high-quality impact at scale.

Partnerships

Partnership sits at the heart of Cambridge Science Centre because the STEM we share with young people must be connected to the world around them.

By working with industry, academia, government and communities, we connect young people with the science, technologies and industries shaping their lives and their futures.

These relationships give us access to expertise, ideas and real-world perspectives that we can translate into experiences that are accurate, relevant and accessible, giving children opportunities to explore, experiment, practise skills and develop their own sense of agency within STEM.

Executive Council 2025

Our Executive Council is fundamental to our long-term approach.

Executive Council members are strategic partners in our long-term mission.

They contribute insight and expertise, challenge our thinking and advocate for our work, helping to ensure that Cambridge Science Centre remains connected to real-world innovation, emerging industries and the evolving challenges facing society.

Their long-term commitment provides the stability that enables us to think beyond individual projects, plan with greater ambition and continue providing high-quality STEM experiences every day.

- Anglia Ruskin University
- AstraZeneca
- Brockton Everlast
- Cambridge Consultants
- Cemex
- Illumina
- MathWorks



Community Partners 2025

Community partners ensure every engagement is child-centric.

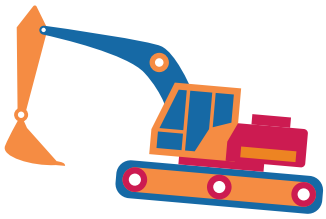
No one knows a community better than the people who live there.

Meaningful engagement cannot be created for communities from a distance. It comes from listening, building trust and working together.

In 2025, we appointed a dedicated Community Development Officer, giving us greater capacity to build these relationships, listen to the communities we serve and ensure their experiences and perspectives inform our decisions.

- **BACA**
- **Little Miracles Cambridge Branch**
- **Red Balloon**
- **Red Hen**
- **Thriving Beyond the Label**
- **NCCP** (weekly sessions)

Building a Better Future



This is the first of our Programmes: two-year deep dives into STEM sectors of local and national importance.

Building a Better Future, focuses on the build environment and was our first programme to put this model into practice.

Throughout 2025, organisations from across the sector contributed expertise, ideas, networks, funding and time to help us understand the breadth of the built environment and the people, skills and decisions involved in shaping the world around us.

In December, this advisory group agreed six areas of focus: Construction, infrastructure, ecology, human-centred design, finance and land management.





This work laid the foundations for a year of translated, hands-on experiences in 2026, bringing the built environment to life for families, schools and communities.

2025 also saw the early development of our next programme, **Your Smart World.** This second programme will open to the public in Spring 2027, exploring the emerging technologies that are already beginning to shape how we live, work and interact with the world around us.

Partners

Trinity College Cambridge
Brockton Everlast Inc.
The Crown Estate
Cambridge Science Park
Barnes Construction
The Cambridge Building Society
CEMEX
COEL
Bidwells

Illumina Case Study



A continuing collaboration with global genomics leaders, Illumina brought the rapidly evolving world of genomics to life for children.

Through the partnership, our Programmes and Impact Team spent time learning more about the complex world of genome sequencing right on the doorstep of children living in the East of England.

Together we have developed unique, age-appropriate hands-on labs activities, delivered strawberry DNA extraction classroom kits and created a new, interactive show for schools and families called *Genome Explorers*.

> “By introducing these ideas early, we can help children see that science is something they can be part of, not just something they learn about in school.”

Hollie Church

Regional Head of Corporate Responsibility (CR) & Sustainability - EMEALA, Illumina

The result

Children build curiosity, confidence and a sense that they too can contribute to the science shaping their world – all of which is happening locally!

Translate

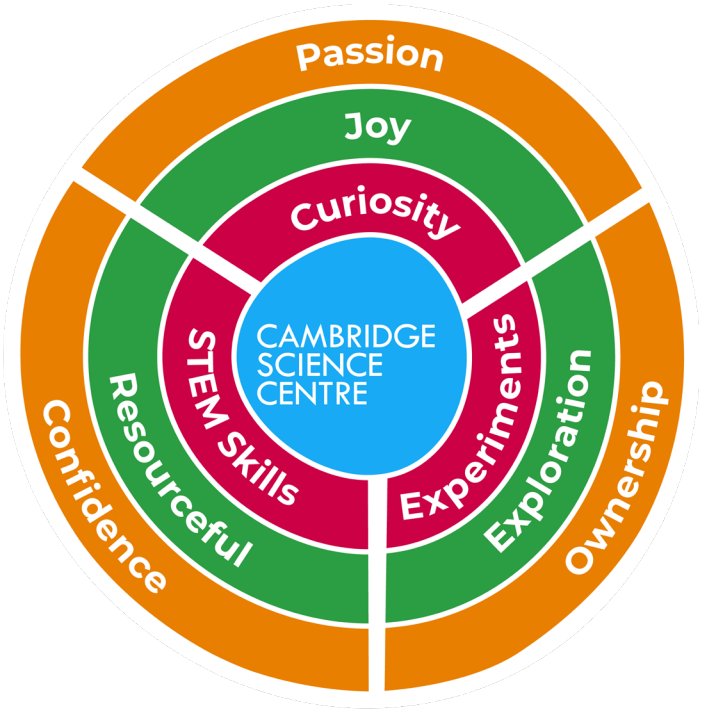
Translation at Cambridge Science Centre is about more than making complex science easier to understand. We design experiences that help young people develop the emotions, skills and behaviours that can shape a positive, confident and lasting relationship with STEM.

Drawing together interdisciplinary research and sector expertise, our Impact Architecture (Theory of Change) guides how we design every Cambridge Science Centre experience.

Its innermost ring identifies the principles we build into every engagement. The middle ring captures the outcomes we want children to experience and practise while they are with us.

These connect to the longer-term impacts in the outer ring, recognising that the experiences children have today can influence the choices, confidence and sense of possibility they carry into the future.

Our Impact Architecture is not only a tool for designing experiences, but a framework through which we can contribute to wider research into the impact of science centres.



Studying epistemic emotions

In 2025, we began collaborating with the University of Bath on a study of epistemic emotions: emotions associated with knowledge and learning, particularly those experienced when encountering new information or ideas, including **curiosity, surprise, awe** and **boredom.**

Continuing into 2026, the research explores how experiences of these emotions within a science centre relate to young people's perceptions of STEM, scientists and science centres, and their desire to engage further.

The findings will help us better understand how emotional experiences can contribute to enduring positive relationships with STEM and, in turn, strengthen the way we design future engagements.



Epidemic Crisis Challenge

Developed in partnership with Roche, the *Epidemic Crisis Challenge Day* exemplifies Cambridge Science Centre's translation model.

Inspired by real-world STEM challenges, Year 5 and 6 pupils became Crisis Response Teams tasked with tackling an emerging epidemic. There was no prescribed method and no single correct answer. Instead, pupils were given a problem, the resources to investigate it and the freedom to develop their own solutions.



What they investigated

Across three structured stages, 3,744 pupils from 55 schools investigated disease transmission through data analysis, designed and tested potential treatments, and analysed patient data to make evidence-based decisions.

By creating an environment in which curiosity drove participation, young people chose to remain actively engaged throughout the day.

In a programme focused particularly on schools experiencing higher levels of disadvantage, pupils who had not previously enjoyed science reported an increased willingness to consider STEM-related futures for themselves.

What it demonstrated

The experience demonstrated something fundamental to our approach: with the right environment, support and opportunity, confidence can grow, participation can change and young people can surprise even the adults who know them best.

> **"They loved the chemicals and I was impressed by some children's understanding of the higher level chemistry."**
>
> Teacher,
> William Barcroft School

Engage



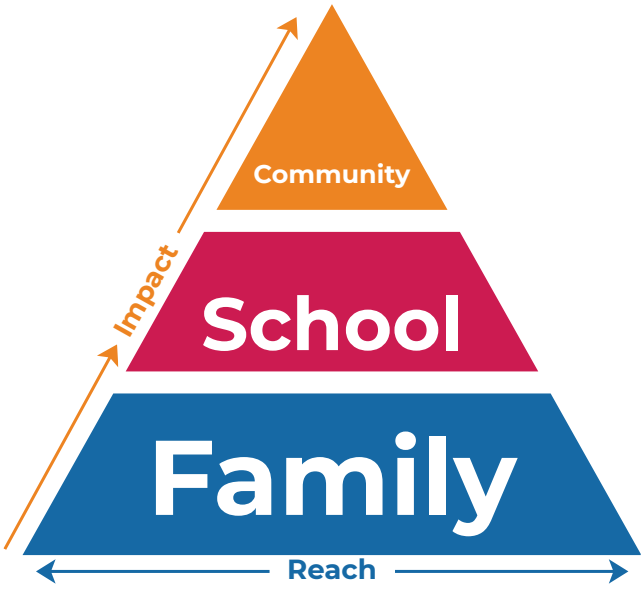
2025 marked the first full year in which our Cambridge and Wisbech Centres operated in parallel. Our ambition is for each Centre to become a locally rooted hub of STEM conversation, activity and joy.

Each Centre supports three core audiences:

Public: Open-ended exploration with awe-inspiring shows and curiosity-sparking challenge activities. Wide access allowing for high reach.

Schools: Experiment-based workshops to complement the National Curriculum and widen STEM contexts. Medium reach with opportunity to re-engage a class each year.

Community Groups: Tailored, hands-on experiences for groups working with those facing the greatest barriers to STEM engagement. More focused reach enables consistent, sustained participation over time.



> **“I loved this today! You’ve definitely spiked up my science interest.”**
>
> Pupil, Southcoates Primary

By working with partners across all three, we create opportunities for young people to encounter Cambridge Science Centre through different parts of their lives, whether with their family, at school or within their community.

Repeated encounters matter. They enable children to build familiarity, deepen their confidence and increasingly see STEM not as something distant or belonging to somebody else, but as something in which they can participate.

Our experiences are built around three core elements:

Interactive exhibits

Self-guided, interactive experiences that allow children to experiment, investigate and discover at their own pace.





Live science demonstrations

Memorable, awe-inspiring demonstrations that bring STEM vividly to life.

Hands-on activities

Practical challenges guided by our Science Communicators, giving children opportunities to make, test, question and problem-solve.



Through ongoing partnerships and continuous content development, we curate an evolving calendar of experiences across our Cambridge and Wisbech Centres and across all three audience groups.

This creates reasons to return, allowing children to encounter new ideas over time, reinforce previous experiences, deepen their understanding and build a stronger sense that STEM is a world in which they belong.

Highlights of 2025

January

Wisbech

Focus on attracting and engaging visitors at our Fen-based Centre in the Horsefair Shopping Centre.

February

Epidemic Crisis Response

Roche Partnership: programme developed and delivery begins nation-wide. New style of content and product for Cambridge Science Centre.

March

Would I Sci to You?

Annual STEM comedy panel show at Cambridge Junction with household names James Harkin and Greg Foot leading a curious, often hilarious, exploration of research and every day science.



Highly Commended

Educational Project of the Year, East Prop Awards

October

Big Biology Day and Chelmsford Science Festival

Local STEM engagement event and collaboration with ARU (respectively).

November

Offbeat Science

New style of theatre show delivered as part of Cambridge Jazz Festival, in collaboration with Upbeat Big Band and Cambridgeshire Music.

December

Genome Explorers

Illumina collaboration begins to be delivered nationally across the UK.

May

Building for our next chapter

Aligning our people, structure and capabilities with Cambridge Science Centre's new five-year strategy and ambitions for growth.

April

Stem tots series

Developed with AstraZeneca and delivered via Bright Horizons.

STEM Initiative of the Year

Cambridge Independent Science & Technology Awards



June

Building a Better Future Pilot Report published

Array of partners and new considerations to design the Programme Model.

July

Grand Discoveries

Collaboration with Grand Arcade summer displays to showcase 'behind the scenes' of a Cambridge Science Centre exhibit.

August

Summer at the Trinity Centre

Summer in the Park corporate volunteer programme content set.

September

Community Group Sessions launched

Various partner organisations.

iF Design Award (UX Communication)

For Imaigo, designed and developed by Cambridge Consultants in collaboration with Cambridge Science Centre

Impact at a Glance

Total
39,078

Engagements with children, families and communities across Cambridge and Fenland through our Centres, schools work, outreach and sustained community programmes.

Public visits to our Centres

- **21k** visitors — Cambridge
- **24,182** Total visits
- **3k** visitors — Wisbech

Schools

- **72** Schools (2.3k pupils) — Cambridge
- **157** Institutions (3.7k pupils*)
- **30** Schools (1.4k pupils) — Wisbech

Roche Challenge Day
55 Schools (3.7k pupils*)

* 3,771 included in 'Total' above, with 3,744 engagements from Roche excluded (pupil figure counted in Partner Educational Programmes).

Community Group participant visits

- **573** — Cambridge
- **751** Engagements
- **178** — Wisbech



Partner Educational Programmes

5.1k Students
Illumina Genome Explorers

8,929 Engagements

3.7k* Students
Roche Challenge Day

Festivals & Regional Roadshows

1,445 Engagements

Chelmsford Science Festival
1k people

ARU Peterborough Road Show
195 people

Big Biology Day
250 people

Returning Visitors

30% of public visitors returned for more than one visit, while schools increasingly re-engaged with our programmes across multiple touchpoints.

Within our community work, we deliberately prioritised sustained participation, creating opportunities to build relationships and deepen engagement over time.

30% Returning Visitors



Income and Spend 2025

2025 was our strongest fundraising year to date, reflecting growing confidence in our model, our ambitions and the partnerships that make our work possible. This support enabled us to invest in the quality and reach of our work while strengthening the foundations required for sustainable future growth.

We continue to operate within a robust financial framework, with oversight from our Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees and a clear focus on ensuring that the resources entrusted to us translate into meaningful opportunities for children and communities.



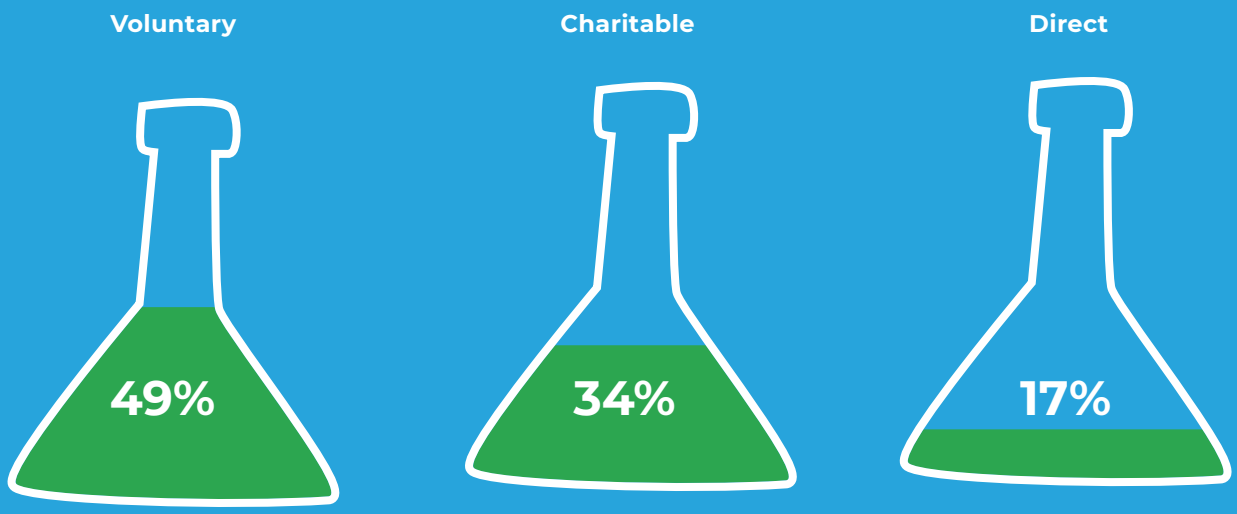
£0.88

of every £1 spent supported the delivery of our charitable work

> **We've been twice now and it's a brilliant indoor activity for these wet winter months!**
> Melanie, February 2025



Income sources



Expenditure breakdown



Full Accounts available on Charity Commission website

Partners and Collaborators

An extraordinary network of partners, collaborators, funders, schools, researchers, universities, community organisations, and supporters make our work possible.

Our Executive Council

Providing long-term strategic support, expertise and advocacy for our mission.

illumina®

BROCKTON EVERLAST INC.

AstraZeneca

CEMEX

MathWorks®

cambridge consultants
Part of Capgemini Invent

a.r.u. | Anglia Ruskin University

Programme Partners

Sharing sector expertise, ideas and resources to help us translate real-world STEM for young people.

Other Partners

Arm
Association of Science & Discovery Centres
Cambridge City Council
Cambridge Festival, University of Cambridge
Cambridge Junction
Cambridge Network
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
Dr David Cleevely CBE
Dr Debbie Allen
Dr Jason Mellad
East Coast Skills Fund
Edina Trust
Eligator Sansom Family Fund
Garfield Weston Foundation
GummerLeathes
Hodge Foundation
Horsefair Shopping Centre, Wisbech
LifeArc
Mr Douglass Cuff
Mr Mike Inglis
Mrs Elizabeth Burke
North Cambridge Community Partnership
Nuclera UK
PEM Accountants
Prof. Jonathan Drori CBE
Roche
The Britford Bridge Trust
The Relithan Charitable Trust
The Swire Charitable Trust

Looking Ahead

2025 drew on more than a decade of Cambridge Science Centre experience to lay the foundations for an ambitious next chapter.

Our aim is to become a centre of excellence for community-led STEM engagement, creating deep local impact while developing approaches with the potential for national reach and influence.

Achieving that ambition requires more than reaching greater numbers. It means:

Investing in quality, evidence and relationships

Understanding what creates lasting change, and

Developing models that can be sustained, repeated and – where appropriate – shared more widely.



"We love the Science Centre and have been going regularly since it opened in its new location in July. Thank you for bringing science to life for the next generation!"
Fiona, January 2025

In 2026 and the following years, this will include:

Investing in our people to build an exceptional science communication team

Developing and extending programme-led engagement across sectors and emerging areas of STEM

Deepening place-based engagement within communities facing the greatest barriers to participation

Strengthening long-term partnerships with industry, academia and communities

Continuing to build a robust, evidence-led approach to impact, evaluation and learning.

Through all of this, we will keep our promise to young people:

'To provide safe spaces where they can explore new ideas, share their thinking, experiment and be courageous; where curiosity is encouraged, questions are celebrated and failure is simply part of discovery.'

Thank you!

for being part of our story.

We are excited for what comes next!



This year has only been possible because of the extraordinary commitment, energy, expertise, and generosity of the people and organisations who support Cambridge Science Centre.

We say a huge thank you to:

- Our extraordinary **team** and **volunteers**
- Our **trustees**; our **partners**, **Collaborators**, **funders** and **supporters**
- The **schools** and **teachers** who choose to bring STEM to life with us
- The **community organisations** that trust us to work alongside them
- The **children**, **families** and **groups** who bring their curiosity, questions and ideas through our doors and into everything we do.

CAMBRIDGE SCIENCE CENTRE

Cambridge

Cambridge Science Centre
The Trinity Centre
Cambridge Science Park
Milton Road
Cambridge
CB4 0FN

Wisbech

Horsefair Shopping Centre
28 Churchill Road
Wisbech
PE13 1AR

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