

Catalyst STEM Stream

Aspirational learning for talented students with a keen interest and an aptitude for learning STEM subjects



The Catalyst STEM Stream at Nova Hreod Academy is a unique opportunity in Swindon for ambitious students who have a keen interest and an aptitude for learning STEM subjects.

The Catalyst STEM Stream is rooted in Swindon's rich history of innovation in technology, design and engineering. Catalyst students will be enabled to play a significant role in society, invigorating industry in Swindon, the UK and the world.

Year 7 students joining the Catalyst STEM Stream in September 2027 will study Science, Technology, Mathematics and Computing in greater depth and at an accelerated pace, working alongside STEM professionals to develop their interests and knowledge.

What is STEM?

STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. STEM subjects are constantly in demand in the modern world, and particularly in Swindon. As a result, excellent employment and future possibilities are available for young people who study the STEM subjects.



Why choose the Catalyst Stream at Nova?



From Year 7, students in the Catalyst Stream have the advantage of studying an extensive Science, Technology, Mathematics and Computing curriculum in greater depth and at an accelerated pace. They enjoy unique opportunities to explore their interests, working alongside STEM professionals to develop their knowledge. The Catalyst curriculum focuses on the skills required to be at the top of these fields so that Catalyst students will be able to go on to top universities and brilliant careers in these areas.

In addition to the requirements of the national curriculum, Catalyst students are given advanced teaching in aspects of the STEM subjects (including software programming and coding) and research skills. They are encouraged to take part in a co-curricular programme in line with our values of Excellence, Hard Work and Kindness, in order to develop their skills and opportunities, preparing them for roles in the STEM sector in later life.

We have forged links with universities, organisations, businesses and local employers to support the Catalyst STEM programme. In their time with us, students will work with universities and receive lectures from academics, attend a range of trips and visits with a focus on science and technology and participate in nationally recognised STEM competitions and challenges.

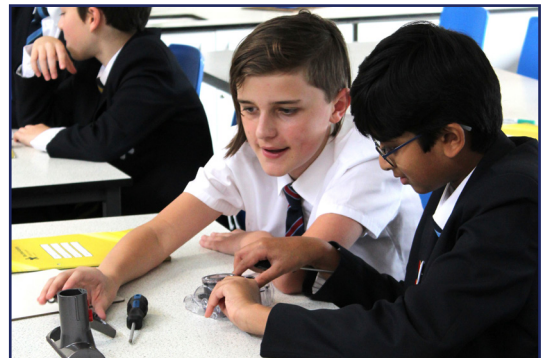


Catalyst application process

Catalyst Stream applicants must have an academic aptitude towards STEM subjects and be able to demonstrate a keen interest in Science, Technology, Mathematics or Computing. In order to be considered for the Catalyst STEM Stream, parents first need to apply for a place at Nova for their child via the annual Swindon Borough Council schools admissions process. Parents are advised to put Nova Hreod Academy as their first preference school, or as one of their three choices while they find out more (the deadline for applications is 31st October).

The selection process for the Catalyst STEM Stream commences when a Year 7 place at Nova has been offered. Parents who have accepted their child's place and registered their child for the Catalyst Stream will receive an invitation for their child to attend the assessment day, where they will complete a series of cognitive assessments. Parents will be informed in writing whether they will be taken to the next stage of the process, when they will attend an interview to discuss a STEM topic of their choice to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and passion.

Parents will be informed by the end of May whether their child has successfully gained a place in the Catalyst Stream.



Next Steps:

1. Register your interest in the Catalyst Stream to receive notifications and further information.
2. Attend one or more of the open events.
3. Book a place for your child to attend the taster sessions.



In previous years our students have had experiences with:



Key dates for 2027 entry

Thursday 16th July 2026	Catalyst Open Morning *
Thursday 1st October 2026	Open Evening
Thursday 8th October 2026	Year 5 & 6 Open Morning *
Thursday 8th October 2026	Catalyst Information Evening *
Saturday 10th October 2026	Catalyst Taster Session 1
Tuesday 13th October 2026	Year 5 & 6 Open Morning *
Saturday 31st October 2026	SBC application deadline for secondary schools
Saturday 5th December 2026	Catalyst Taster Session 2
Saturday 23rd January 2027	Catalyst Taster Session 3
Monday 8th March 2027	Year 6 Open Morning *
Thursday 18th March 2027	Catalyst Open Morning *
Saturday 24th April 2027	Catalyst Assessment Day
Saturday 8th May 2027	Catalyst Interview Day **
Monday 17th May 2027	Outcome of applications confirmed

* To register for open mornings please visit the Catalyst section of the school website www.novahreodacademy.org.uk

** The interview is an informal discussion with a Catalyst Stream teacher. More information will be sent after the assessments.



Register your interest at:
www.novahreodacademy.org.uk



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Ofsted

Good
Provider