

*"The zinc/sulphur rocket demo isn't working. We think something is wrong with the zinc powder we just bought. It doesn't look the same as our old stock."*

We received several such calls for help from schools throughout Scotland who couldn't get this demonstration to work. In all cases, the common denominator was newly purchased zinc powder.

Having been unable to provide a solution for the schools over the telephone, we contacted the suppliers. They were unaware of any changes to the zinc powder they were supplying but agreed to check on whether the production process had altered. They also sent us samples of the zinc powder they were currently supplying to schools.

The zinc powder we received looked different to our old stock. It was a light silvery-grey powder. Our old stock was darker and dull grey in colour (Figure 1).

We tried a number of experiments with the new and old stock. The experiments only worked with the old stock.

#### Where to get suitable zinc powder supplies

Scientific & Chemical now supply zinc powder which is suitable for the zinc/sulphur rocket and other demonstrations undertaken in schools.

Zinc powder S&C code 0356/1 - smallest quantity is 1kg/cost £31.68. (Price quoted at 13-07-09)

#### Acknowledgement

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Figure 1 - Old and new zinc powders