

and three Year 6 children working with a parent to create it.

"It took 20 minutes to make each letter out of felt," said Theo. "I also made the robin that is part of the banner. I'm really happy that we did it."

Meanwhile Orla Monteiro D'Aguiar, 11, from **Steep CofE Primary School** near Petersfield, said: "I really enjoyed seeing the architecture of this beautiful building. I loved doing the sculpting with wire. For the artwork, we did animals from the sky like a dove or raven, and it was great to paint them different colours."

And classmate Coen Baines, 11, also enjoyed the wire sculpting and the singing workshops. He said: "I thought the organ sounded really good. And it was fun to see the bishop's dog."

"I designed a bee as part of the artwork, as I really like bees. The designs hanging from the walls were really impressive."

Each academic year our church schools take part in a themed project organised by our diocesan education team, which also serves as a focus for this annual Leavers' Service. In previous years, Year 6 pupils have decorated lifesize fibreglass sheep or created clay sculptures.

This year's 'TriWonder' project was created in partnership with Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and includes some specially-commissioned resources. They can be used in collective worship in schools and also in church activities for children and young people.

Find out more about our Leavers' Services on [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/leavers](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/leavers), and download the Triwonder resources on [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/triwonder](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/triwonder)

## School inspires love of nature through outdoor learning

**MOST** lunchtimes, Wilf Rhodes will run into the playground, fill a watering can and water the seeds that he has carefully planted.

Meanwhile his friend Tielle Onyango will be removing the dead poppy heads from the plants growing in the raised beds.

Their dedication to the plants, flowers and wildlife in their school grounds shows how much these pupils value the natural world. The regular outdoor learning sessions have ensured that care for God's creation is paramount at St Alban's CofE Primary School in Havant.

Wilfred, aged nine, who is also a hedgehog champion, said: "I'm really excited to be working with nature. It's really fun, and I like being outside instead of inside."

"I do water plants and pick up litter at lunchtime. The litter picking is to help hedgehogs because they eat the plastic or get trapped in it. And we rub the poppy heads so the seeds fall into the basket."

And Tielle, who is also nine, said: "Nature is beautiful, and I love it that you can help with the plants. I always like to help the teachers."

Staff and pupils at St Alban's Primary, in West Leigh, have emphasised outdoor learning, conservation and the environment for many years. They've been improving their grounds to encourage pollinators such as bees, butterflies and beetles since 2016 as part of a national Polli:Nation project.

Now care for nature is a regular part of their curriculum – every child gets some dedicated time learning outside. Teacher Julie Newman has been the school's outdoor lead, part of a Hampshire-wide scheme called Trailblazer.

By the time each pupil leaves the school, they are expected to have developed a love of the natural world, something which fits the Christian idea of good stewardship of our planet.

Six new fruit trees have been planted this year. Year R pupils have a new cherry tree outside their classroom and voted to call it 'Choo Cha Cherry'.

Earlier this year, Year 5 pupils chose an area of the grounds to improve for wildlife. They created a bug tower (pictured on the front cover), a barrel pond for frogs and pond skaters, and a nature valley in a narrow strip of greenery next to the playground. It took them six weeks to develop the habitat in this part of the grounds.

And a self-styled 'boy band' of tree champions won the group category at a national contest organised by The Tree Council. The band, Tree Trouble, played a song they'd created on a variety of instruments at the Royal Horticultural Society in Wisley.

Volunteers from the local community are also on hand to help the children with some of the tasks – Diana Towler and Lyn Lyons are among those who plant seeds in a potting shed, and help to create flower beds.

And young tree champions speak up for the importance of nature, based on their experience in school.



Left: Tielle, Isaac and Wilfred caring for flowers; above: Year R pupils plant and name a new tree; right: watering the plants is a popular lunchtime activity at St Alban's CofE Primary; below: Rosie Parvin and Bella Gilbert-Burke with their bird feeder table

Year 6 pupil Rosie Parvin, aged 11, was among pupils who designed and ran activities at an eco-fair in Emsworth. They created pollinator-friendly 'seed bugs' with visitors and talked about how we can garden with wildlife in mind.

Her classmate, Bella Gilbert-Burke, 11, said: "At home a lot of people play video games, but here we are outside and outdoors a lot of the time. One of the things we've created was a bird feeder table, which had water in the middle. It feels good to have helped."

Trailblazer lead Julie Newman, who has just stepped down after 28 years there, said: "If you just teach children about biodiversity loss, but don't enable them to take action, we miss an opportunity to learn to make a difference."

"This generation will inherit the challenges and impacts of the ecological crises, so it's vital they do act and their voices are heard. We try to give them a love of nature so that protecting it comes naturally."



"Looking after nature is something we are truly passionate about but we've come to see that we also need nature."

"When we are anxious or need to calm our minds, like our Year 6s during their SATS, being outdoors helps our sense of wellbeing. Nature is, quite simply, good for the soul."

For more details, see: [www.stalbansprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.stalbansprimaryschool.co.uk)