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St Alban's CE (Aided) Primary School

At a glance

Location: Havant, Hampshire

Project name: **Nature Needs Us Now, and We Need Nature.**

Theme: Trees and Biodiversity (Nature)

No. Students: 216

Free school meals: 18%

English as an Additional Language (EAL): 6%

NC progression 14.5% to 60.9%. 93% of children grown a greater sense of connection.



Summary/introduction

St Alban's CE (Aided) is a Primary School in Havant, Hampshire, located in a deprived housing estate. There are 216 pupils at the school, aged between 4 and 11 years old. 18% of children receive Free School Meals and 6% speak English as an additional language. The school decided on their theme through discussion and the results of their student questionnaire which showed the school community wanted to improve the biodiversity of their school grounds. Pupils also chose Health and Wellbeing as a sub theme.

“Without biodiversity, there can be no health.” (Isla, Year 4 pupil)

Young Tree Champion Activities

Connection activities: Throughout the project the students have reflected on how nature makes them feel and why nature and biodiversity are important. Connectedness was incorporated into Earth Day, Children's Mental Health Week, 30 Days Wild and well-being days. Activities included nature sound

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maps, writing and sharing tree messages and creating seed packets for a “Seeds of Hope” project. This whole school project was successful at linking the school back together, as a community.

Learning activities: The project has been embedded into the formal curriculum. Examples include collecting data for BioBlitzes, writing nature inspired poetry and creating a tree and biodiversity trail. The young tree champions have produced short videos promoting why it’s important to protect nature (Be a Force for Nature). Elsie, was a runner up in our year 1 speaking up competition.

Campus activities: To increase the biodiversity in the school grounds, students created food and shelter habitats such as beetle buckets, a beetle bank, hoverfly lagoons, long grass areas and a dead hedge. Pupils surveyed bird species and researched the best location to put up bird boxes.

Community and beyond activities: Following student voice requests, volunteers from the community helped to create a large bird feeder and compost bins by repurposing found materials. A community group helped to maintain the pond area and our local tree wardens ran a seed workshop. The dead hedge was completed with the support of a local wildlife gardener with advice and materials donated by a local coppicer. A local young expert Harry Munt supported the school in building and installing bird boxes and has now become a Young Tree Champion Ambassador, sharing his love for nature through stories, as part of a national competition.

Year 6 shared a presentation of the project at the Portsmouth Diocesan Church of England Leavers’ Service. Year 5 delivered an assembly to the school, and their parents, on being a *Force for Nature*.

Community event: Led by Julie Newman (YTC lead), and supported with sustainability by Sharon James (Deputy Head), a whole school community “Nature and Sustainability Roadshow” was held in May 2022. This Saturday event involved 12 local businesses and organisations, including Hampshire and IOW Wildlife Trust and Southern Co-op. It’s aim was to bring the school and community together, to connect more people with nature and to share ideas. Pupils and staff contributed to a nature photography exhibition, grew wildlife friendly plants to donate to visitors, gave a guided tour and ran the plant and Eco Club stalls to encourage others to make a difference & take action for the environment.

“I went to your Wilder day yesterday and thought it was brilliant. Such a lot of good ideas as well as so much evidence of your efforts around the site. I really enjoyed it.” Havant Climate Alliance



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“There was such a lovely atmosphere all day. Conversations around nature and responsibility for the planet were so positive. It was fantastic to see children and families enjoying the grounds and showing their passion for nature and sustainability!” Sharon James, Deputy Headteacher

“We were honoured to support this event and our team enjoyed meeting the local community. We're glad the bags went down well. There were some great designs.” Southern Co-op

Whole school outcomes

Behaviour changes

“The children edited the project title *Nature Needs Us Now* to incorporate *And We Need Nature*, as they grew aware of their developing relationship with the natural world.

Informal observations and pupil interviews indicate that staff are taking learning outside more frequently. The lead class has grown in confidence and resilience, with pupils more willing and able to speak up for nature. Our Beacon year has seen them spreading the message to others and all classes have Nature Ambassadors.” Julie Newman (YTC School Lead).

Learning, skills development

Over a 6-week period, pupils created audio recordings/mini podcasts, explored nature photography and took 360° images of the grounds. These were uploaded to the school website and pupils then generated QR codes for an outdoor trail. This whole class project was executed, from start to finish, by the pupils and developed their computing and speaking skills. This was a completely new unit of work and 3 staff members developed their skills alongside the children.

“Upon returning to class-based learning, after lockdown, the class significantly lacked confidence in computing and problem solving. Many gave up after the first attempt. The trail really captured their imagination and they worked together to overcome the challenges, with all pupils contributing to a successful outcome.” Julie Newman.

Biodiversity

The trees planted in the first year of the project (by the lead class) were named and adopted by other classes in during the second year. The Beacon whips were used to plant a new run of hedging onsite and the pupils also grew on and donated whips to other schools and community groups. *A Tree Seed*



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Workshop with Havant Tree Wardens (Autumn 2021) generated some seedlings which will be planted in autumn 2022. Pupils captured red tailed bumblebee footage on their YTC trail cam; this was the first ever nest on the site. BioBlitzes have shown an increase in species from 27 in 2019 to 60 species in 2022.



Tree Warden, seedling workshop.



Young Tree Champions, mulching new hedgerow



Young Tree Champions, planting trees.



School orchard



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