

# #ForceForNature



By Rebecca Broxholme

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## What is the Tree Champion Project?

Partnering with Learning through Landscapes, Speakers Trust, The University of Derby, and [Eco-schools](#), the Tree Champion Project is run by the Tree Council to help young people connect, learn and share the power of trees.

Schools that are involved have access to a club account where they can share their project with other Tree Champion schools and are given resources - including five beautiful trees, a tech kit (including a microscope camera and VR headset) and tailored Speakers Trust teacher training and pupil workshops.

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## Why did we get involved?

With mental health and well-being being a priority across all communities, this project aimed to inspire teachers and children to grow deeper connections with each other, trees and nature, to learn from trees and strive for every young person to stand up and be heard.

Our children are given the opportunity to learn to speak confidently and passionately about the role of trees in helping to tackle the crisis. The project also supports teachers by giving them the tools and confidence to teach outdoors and share their skills, knowledge and further opportunities with other leading schools from across the UK.

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## What have we done so far?

**Project aim:** to improve the mental and physical health and well-being of our children and enhance outdoor science across school.

- Initial planting for tree project - our Y4 and Y6 team worked alongside Rachel from AEBA to plant the new trees, learning about how to care for trees, how they help the environment and how outdoors can help mental health.
- The children also had a 'Speak up for Nature' workshop ran by The Speakers Trust in school where children learnt to deliver a speech about trees and why we should save them. The children reflected on how they help the community.
- We used VR technology to explore other communities and areas such as the rainforest and make comparisons.

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- We have run sessions to explore and use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment.
- Children have been locating and classify wildlife in the area where new trees are planted.
- We identified and described the basic structure of a variety of common flowering plants, including trees including labelling of trees to educate peers.

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## What next?

**Objective:** to develop links with the community and share a love of the outdoors.

- Talking Tree Trail - we hope to run a Talking Tree Trail where one group of children from a targeted year group work on a mini project choosing a tree-related book and recording themselves reading sections to attach to a tree. For wellbeing sessions - children can access the tree area and have time to follow the trail, listen to the story and write or produce a piece of art or simply sit and admire the nature to promote positive feelings. Parents from the chosen year group can come into school and access the story too in after school sessions.
- Memory Tree - children will be able to access the memory tree at any point to post a memory into the memory box or create a piece of art related to a loved one to hang from the tree branches on gardening twine.
- Families will be invited into the area for gardening sessions and tree updates to develop mental health and wellbeing. (Covid guidelines may mean this is a live virtual session led by adults in school and children and streamed to people in the community).
- School to support a Force for Nature competition where children create their own wildlife garden/ potted garden (if children do not have outdoor space) using resources they find in school and around their own homes.