

THE BEE'S KNEES: BEACON VIEW PRIMARY ACADEMY WINS PRESITIGIOUS NATIONAL BEES' NEEDS CHAMPION AWARD

Beacon View Primary Academy in Portsmouth is celebrating after being named a winner in the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' (Defra) 2026 Bees' Needs Champion Awards. The award recognises the school's outstanding commitment to protecting bees and other pollinators through environmental education, habitat creation and inspiring children to care for nature.



The Bees' Needs Champion Awards celebrate individuals, schools, community groups and organisations across England that are making a real difference for pollinators. Winning the award places Beacon View Primary Academy among a select group of organisations recognised nationally for helping to create a better future for bees and other vital pollinating insects.

Over recent years, pupils and staff at Beacon View Primary have worked together to transform areas of the school into thriving habitats for wildlife. The school benefits from a dedicated gardening team with Julie Newman from the Hampshire Garden Trust, staff member Karen Smith, and volunteer Melissa Watton who continues to run and organise the Edible Kitchen Garden. The school also receives funding from the Hampshire Garden Trust. Through planting pollinator-friendly flowers, creating spaces for insects to flourish and learning about biodiversity, pupils have developed a deeper understanding of the important role bees play in food production and healthy ecosystems.

Beacon View Principal Catherine Williams and the gardening team collected their award at the Bees' Needs Science Festival at RHS Garden Wisley. They had a great day speaking to the Royal Horticultural Society Science Team and meeting nature experts from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the University of Surrey. They heard some useful ideas on how to encourage bees and other pollinators which they will be introducing at school.

Year 3 pupil Maya said:

"I like gardening because it's fun and I learn to keep plants alive."

A Year 6 pupil, Alexis, said:

"I enjoy gardening because I like being outside and learning about plants."

Catherine Williams, Principal of Beacon View Primary Academy, said:

"We are incredibly proud to receive this national award. Our pupils take very seriously their role in protecting nature and I am constantly impressed by the way in which they look after our outdoor environment. Our school is now a welcoming place for pollinators and our pupils are always eager to show visitors the work they are doing to protect our natural habitats. We hope to inspire others to follow our lead and look forward to sharing tips and ideas with our local community."