

News release

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Salisbury school pupils get creative for nature

Children from St Osmund's Primary win £1,000 and a VIP day at the Natural History Museum

A group of pupils from St Osmund's Primary School in Salisbury have won £1,000 for their school and a special VIP trip to the Natural History Museum in London. The school's gardening club, run by parent Xanthe Dell, were inspired to enter the competition which ran in *National Geographic Kids* magazine as part of the Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) project. OPAL put up the prize from its grant from the Big Lottery Fund to help encourage schools to improve their outdoors spaces.

Entrants were asked to create a nature collage out of natural items they could find in their playground. The children, aged between five and eleven, worked together to design their collage which beat 180 other entrants to the prize.

On Thursday 16 July the school was presented with their prize money by Linda Davies, OPAL Director, Debbie Lippard from the Big Lottery Fund and Lauren Jarvis, Editor of *National Geographic Kids*. The children were then treated to 'behind-the-scenes' tours, free entry to *Butterfly Jungle* and special goodie bags.



Mark Fowler, Head Teacher, St Osmund's Primary School, said "The children couldn't believe that they had actually won this fantastic prize, many of them had never been to the Natural History Museum before so it is a really special treat for them. In addition, the money will help to make our gardens and playground an even more enjoyable place to spend time - for both the children and their teachers."

Dr Linda Davies, OPAL Director, Imperial College London, said "Encouraging young nature enthusiasts is vital to ensure England's plants, insects and wildlife are protected for future generations. It is wonderful that the children here today are already so passionate about nature and I hope that this trip inspires them to continue and develop their interest in the natural world."

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Notes to editor

1. Image available in high resolution
2. Image caption '*Pupils from St Osmund's school are presented with their prize money.*'
3. Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) is a nation-wide partnership initiative that will inspire communities to discover, enjoy and protect their local environments. It aims to create a new generation of nature-lovers by stimulating interest through local and national projects which are accessible, fun and relevant to anyone who wants to take part. For more information, please visit www.OPALexplorenature.org
4. The Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme was launched in November 2005 to help communities enjoy and improve their local environments. The programme funds a range of activities from local food schemes and farmers markets, to education projects teaching people about the environment. Imperial College London (the leading OPAL partner) was awarded a **£11,760,783** Changing Spaces grant in August 2007
5. The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004. It was established by Parliament on 1 December 2006. Full details of the work of the Big Lottery Fund, its programmes and awards are available on the website: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk
6. National Geographic Kids magazine is an exciting magazine for boys and girls (aged six-to-14), and a great resource for teachers and parents. Launched in the British Isles in October 2006 and published monthly, this unique title bridges the entertainment and educational divide and encourages literacy and learning through its inspiring features and amazing photography. Subjects featured in National Geographic Kids include: wildlife, environment, geography, science, history and exploration, world cultures, ancient civilizations, inventions, space, and art/craft. The magazine is available in all major supermarkets and good magazine retail outlets such as WH Smith and Borders, as well as via subscription at ngkids.co.uk and has a monthly circulation of 70,000 copies.