

The power of one

SCHOOLS SPECIAL

Painting a better future

A London artist's innovative website is using creativity to engage kids with climate change

INSPIRATION STRIKES IN ALL sorts of places and, in Jane Langley's case, it was a Toyota Prius.

She was on the way back to her London home after a "wonderful" talk on the environment by US journalist Thomas Friedman. Suddenly, the art tutor and painter felt compelled to start a new creative project. "I said to my partner Jim, 'It's got to be kids, it's got to be about climate change and it's got to be positive,'" she recalls.

Since that day in October 2008, the 50-year-old has devoted every spare hour to her website Cool It Schools. Jane welcomes anything with a global-warming theme—poems, paintings, sculptures. "It's an archive, a worldwide resource," she enthuses. "I spread the word through



Jane Langley (left) gets down with the kids at The Charter School in London

(Inset) a child in an eco-friendly school drama



attending countless climate-change conferences and making hundreds of calls to schools, councils and others."

She also puts on real-life arts events, such as a recent show at her daughter Holly's school in Southwark. "The maths department made origami mobiles based on graphs charting sea temperatures," says Jane. "Other children built a huge ocean frieze, with waves made out of fabric and bits of junk bobbing around."

She has collaborated with The Prince's Rainforests Project—getting children to

make giant tree frogs, the best of which were displayed at St James's Palace—and her latest initiative asks schools to create a wildlife garden in their grounds to mark International Day for Biological Diversity on May 22.

"The one thing I insist on is that the art should be fun," says Jane. "There's been too much climate-change gloom and the public have switched off. I want to harness creative energy to connect people."

Visit coolitschools.com for details.

Christopher Middleton

In with the IT crowd

Gill Farrington turns kids into high-tech tutors

THE ELDERLY OF RURAL SOUTH DERBYSHIRE are joining the computer revolution, all thanks to one woman. For the past four years, Gill Farrington, 66, has been arranging for teenagers from local schools to go into sheltered housing to teach computer skills to the residents.

When Gill, a county councillor, and ten other community activists launched the Swadlincote 50+ Forum in 2005 to give a voice to older people, it became clear that learning how to use computers and mobile phones would give them a connection to the outside world. So Gill enlisted the help of enthusiastic local IT teacher Paul Hatt

Teaching adults in sheltered housing accommodation

