

Digging Deep

Renowned botanist David Bellamy unearths some magic at West London Academy



Wild Things: Professor David Bellamy with Primary students Shalla and Alex

“MIGHTY oaks from little acorns grow”, says the ancient proverb.

That is the intention of West London Academy after renowned botanist and environmentalist Professor David Bellamy visited the school to lead a tree planting ceremony in the new Academy Fields Outdoor Learning Centre.

The event marked a day of fun and learning for students, as well as staff, as they got their hands dirty planting trees to improve the local environment and promote biodiversity.

By Christmas more than 5,000 trees will have been planted in Academy Fields; something which David Bellamy hopes will help “stitch the world back together”.

Speaking to *Term Times*, Professor Bellamy highlighted the im-

portance of looking after the environment. “It is important that we grow minds so that people, especially children, understand and appreciate the living planet. We need to encourage and be pro-active when talking about biodiversity and natural history.

“It is wonderful that the school has these facilities and is doing wonderful things with them. Academy Fields is inspirational and I could see from the faces of the students that they were also inspired.”

During his visit Professor Bellamy lead assemblies in the Academy Theatre where he reinforced his message about protecting the planet. Students were left in no doubt about the threats the natural world is facing and what they can do to improve things.

The day was organised by the Tree Appeal, of which David Bellamy is the patron. The aim of Tree Appeal is to encourage and facilitate businesses who wish to support the environment and give back to the natural world. The Academy was pleased to welcome Printing.com and Santander, both of whom donated the trees, to take part in the planting.

Professor Bellamy could not hide his delight. “I am a big kid. I love getting dirty, digging up worms and planting trees.

“I could see from the smiling faces that students were equally excited. Growing trees is like growing minds, and if I was to be re-incarnated I would love to come back as a West London Academy student.”