

SPARKENHOE COMMUNITY PRIMARY, LEICESTER

■ Children and gardeners create nature zone at school

Pupils help design own wildlife haven

BY PETER SQUIRES

CHILDREN at a primary school have added the finishing touches to a new wildlife area in their playground, with help from Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust's team of Grow Wild gardeners.

Sparkenhoe Community Primary, in Leicester, was a winner in the My Wild Life Adventure Competition – part of the trust's Wild Forest School project.

All city primary schools were invited to submit a design of a nature zone that they would like to have created in their grounds.

Dr Helen O'Brien, city council senior nature conservation officer, who was one of the judges, said: "The winning entrants really showed how the school and local community were going to get involved in creating their own wildlife area at their school.

"These areas are so important for our wildlife here in Leicester and help to provide a safe haven for species to survive and thrive."

When designing their garden, the children at Sparkenhoe were keen to attract wildlife to their school grounds, have somewhere to grow fruit and vegetables, and create an area where they

could sit and study their new visitors.

The Grow Wild gardeners started work on the school's wildlife area over the summer, putting in a new pond, raised beds and bespoke seating.

The children added the finishing touches, creating various zones designed to attract different species to the school.

They helped plant up the pond, constructed a mini-beast hotel and planted bulbs ready for spring.

Pupil Zain-Ul Islam, seven, who helped to create the school's new garden, said: "We planted things in the pond, we saw insects and used logs to make homes for them to live in."

Katherine Burns, senior coordinator at Sparkenhoe, said: "This has been an exciting project for the children. It isn't often that they get to plan ideas for a space that was underused and see those plans come to life.

"It was fantastic to win the competition and get the children involved in the work. The other classes have all thought it is wonderful."



GREEN FINGERS: Pupils with Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust's Grow Wild gardeners