

# British eight-year-olds publish study in top science journal

December 22 2010

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A bumblebee collecting pollen of a cherry blossom. A group of British children aged between eight and 10 had their school project on bees published by the prestigious Royal Society in a world scientific first, the society said Wednesday.

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The [pupils](#) from Blackawton primary school in the southwestern English county of Devon investigated how [bumblebees](#) see colours and patterns using a series of experiments in a local churchyard.

The findings by the 25 children, drawn up with a scientist who lives in the area, have been published in *Biology Letters*, a peer-reviewed journal published by the Royal Society.

"The field of insect colour and pattern vision is generally poorly understood and the findings reported by the school children represent a genuine advance in the field," the Royal Society said in a statement.

The headmaster of the school, Dave Strudwick, said his pupils "devised, conducted and wrote up an experiment which resulted in genuinely novel findings, so they deserve to be published."

The children used patterns drawn with coloured pencil to see whether the [insects](#) would go for sugar water and avoid salt water.

"We discovered that bumblebees can use a combination of colour and spatial relationships in deciding which colour of flower to forage from. We also discovered that science is cool and fun because you get to do stuff that no one has ever done before," they concluded in the paper.

[Biology Letters](#) editor Brian Charlesworth said their paper was a "world first in high quality scientific publishing."

**More information:** Paper online: [rsbl.royalsocietypublishing.org ... 1.2010.1056.abstract](https://rsbl.royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsbl.2010.1056)

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Citation: British eight-year-olds publish study in top science journal (2010, December 22)  
retrieved 28 April 2024 from  
<https://phys.org/news/2010-12-british-eight-year-olds-publish-science-journal.html>

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