

Elephant activist impressed by forward-thinking pupils

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PUPILS at St Swithun's Junior School welcomed artist and activist Holly Budge to talk about her award-winning exhibition and fundraising initiative 'How Many Elephants?'

Inspired by her work, every child from Reception to Year 6 designed and coloured their own elephant to create a whole-school display in support of Holly's campaign.

Designed to raise global awareness of the devastating impact of the elephant ivory trade, as part of the campaign the former Medstead girl is seeking to "inspire young minds" and has already reached out to more than 1,000 schoolchildren, who have visited her 'How Many Elephants' exhibition and taken part in workshops.



Holly Budge (centre back) with staff and students from St Swithun's Junior School

According to Holly, 96 African elephants are poached in the wild each day for their ivory. At the current rate they will be extinct by 2025. Holly has turned this disheartening statistic into a powerful exhibition to raise awareness and much-needed funds for elephant conservation.

St Swithun's pupils from Year 2 and Year 3 visited Holly's gallery in Alresford and took part in workshops. They were inspired to join her digital petition and create their own exhibition, which they invited Holly along to see.

Holly said: "It has been a pleasure collaborating with such a forward-thinking school. St Swithun's Junior School has truly embraced my exhibition 'How Many Elephants?', with two year groups visiting the exhibition and taking part in my workshops. They have also joined in with my digital petition campaign leading them to hold their own impressive exhibition of 168 elephants.

"It has been a pleasure inspiring young minds and introducing new ideas and knowledge.

"The parents and teachers have played an active role throughout and have been very supportive and generous."

Holly is raising funds for the Black Mambas, South Africa's first and only all-female front line anti-poaching team, and is planning to participate in their intensive training course to raise awareness and help support the work of these brave and courageous women. She aims to take her award-winning exhibition on the road to New York, Beijing and Hong Kong with the hope that she can change attitudes towards the ivory trade worldwide.