

Young heroes of the laboratory

DNA jewelry or self-made lip balm – everyone who conducts experiments at the new Baylab UK takes home a small souvenir, as well as learning how exciting biology and chemistry can be.



Experiments to make you gasp: ten-year-old Bethany becomes a scientist in the student lab.

Scientists wear a special outfit. This is the first thing the young researchers learn when they set foot in Baylab UK. "Getting the blue gloves on was a little bit difficult," seven-year-old Sevadhi recalls. "But when I put on the white lab coat and protective glasses, I felt like a real scientist," she proudly declares. And this is precisely what Baylab UK

aims to achieve. The latest in the series of Bayer student laboratories opened its doors in mid-March 2017 as part of an £11 million investment in the opening of the new UK/IRE Bayer Headquarters. The Baylab

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glass sphere.*

Chester, 12

and bath bombs, discover about enzymes and investigate the genetic background to our sense of taste. The students particularly like the fact that they even get to take a memento home with them. "We manufactured a lip balm that I really like. Even my mum tried it," says Naira, who is likewise seven. In another workshop, the young researchers learn that they can extract their genetic blueprint – DNA – from just a few cells from the mucous membrane of their mouths. Twelve-year-old Chester now has a valuable keepsake – his own DNA, safely packed in a glass sphere.

In school, there is often little time – or the requisite laboratory equipment – for experimenting. "But a basic knowledge of science is very important for our children's future," Schierbaum explains. "Our experiment stations are designed to teach practical skills at an early stage." And this is what the school students enjoy most of all – pouring liquids into test tubes, using pipettes to transfer solutions and putting nutrient solutions into petri dishes. "That was the best day of my life" is how Sevadhi sums up her experience. ■

provides young people with the chance to conduct experiments from the ages of 7 to 18. "We want to usefully complement schools' teaching programs," says Emma Schierbaum, head of the new Baylab. "This educational initiative and the 14 Baylabs all over the world focus on awakening interest in the natural sciences, the chance to become a researcher for real and developing youngsters' own ideas and solutions." In a range of hands-on workshops, students can learn about the characteristics of waxes and oils and how to use them to create lip balms



Space to experiment in ten countries: the new Baylab in Reading, UK, is one of 14 Bayer student labs worldwide.