



Finland's schools ditch traditional classrooms for open-plan!

Around 100 schools so far have been redesigned as part of a massive refurbishment plan in Finland. Their new curriculum mixes projects and digital skills with traditional subjects.

In a typical school one hundred pupils work near each other with several teachers, who can then share their knowledge.

Reino Tapaninen from The Finnish National Agency for Education says, "The teachers and pupils seem happier in the new learning environments, but it requires the commitment and acceptance of the entire school community so that the new operating culture can work."

It can be very loud with that many pupils in one space so the designers have paid a lot of attention to acoustics. The schools have lots of carpets, curtains and soft materials.

Do you think this is a good idea? Let us know how you would feel if your school was open plan!



Pictured: A typical classroom.

Ozone layer hole above Antarctica could be repaired by 2060!



Pictured: A typical view in Antarctica.

According to a UN report, the upper layer of ozone over the Northern Hemisphere will be repaired by 2030, and the damage over the Southern Hemisphere will be back to normal by the middle of the century.

The ozone layer's increasing health has been put down to the 1987 Montreal Protocol - an international treaty banning ozone-depleting chemicals, including chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), alongside new technology.

It is the layer that shields the Earth from cancer-causing solar rays and the report says it is recovering at a rate of one to three percent a decade.



Sniffer dogs able to detect malaria from people's socks!



Pictured: A picture of Freya, the sniffer dog trained to sniff out malaria at Durham University. Image from Durham University's Twitter Page.

Dogs could be trained to sniff out malaria in people after trials showed the animals were able to smell the disease in samples of socks worn by infected children.

The disease, caused by parasites, is transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. It can be prevented and cured with antimalarial drugs.

The dogs were able to correctly identify 70 per cent of the malaria-infected samples and were also able to correctly identify 90 per cent of the samples without malaria parasites.

The team said sniffer dogs could provide the first non-invasive, portable and rapid test for identifying malaria carriers.

Although the research is in its early stages, scientists hope trained sniffer dogs could help to stop malaria spreading between countries and lead to infected people being identified earlier and treated more quickly.

Scientists count whales from space

More than 70 percent of the world is covered in ocean: a vast, deep wilderness of water. But scientists are finding ingenious ways to study its secrets - without even getting their toes wet. Researchers are using extremely high resolution satellite images to track different species of whales as they move around the globe.

They were able to map whale species swimming near Hawaii, Mexico, Argentina and Italy. They published their results in the journal Marine Mammal Science.

"It is a big problem, trying to count whales," study author and University of Cambridge whale ecologist Hannah Cubaynes said. Whales live in every ocean and swim huge distances in everyday life. Expeditions to visit potential whale locations can be lengthy, costly and sometimes just too dangerous—making the creatures difficult to follow.

"Boats and planes can't go everywhere, but satellites can" Cubaynes said.



Pictured: A Whale.

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