

Smart idea helps school protect property

STUDENTS at Backwell School have joined forces with police to fight back against thieves who target their classrooms.

Backwell School has suffered a number of break-ins over the past several years, including one raid in which thousands of pounds of computer equipment was stolen.

The police have now teamed up with students to mark school property including laptops, projectors, interactive whiteboards, musical instruments and other valuable items with forensically coded Smartwater.

Smartwater is a colourless liquid and each bottle contains a unique chemical code like DNA.

Each bottle is registered to a particular property, organisation or individual, making it easier to reunite stolen property with its rightful owner.

The clear liquid glows under ultraviolet light and it is almost impossible to remove.

Smartwater sprinkler systems are also being installed across North Somerset, covering intruders in the liquid, making the connection between offenders and specific crime scenes indisputable.

Second-hand stores are also working with police by checking goods for Smartwater so criminals will find it increasingly difficult to sell stolen items.

Backwell School head teacher Julian Baldwin said: "The school is pleased to be working with Avon and Somerset police on this Smartwater project.

"We are always looking for effective ways to improve our security and are grateful for their support in this.

"All our valuable equipment is now Smartwater marked. The students have been fascinated to see

how Smartwater works and we plan to include it in science lessons."

Officers from across the district are visiting local schools to deliver the Smartwater kits and help mark property.

Lessons will also be given to students about DNA, forensic science and their part in crime prevention and detection, as well as the importance of property marking and other preventative measures.

Crime prevention officer PC Paul Morris said: "We are working with Backwell School to make sure property is security marked and easily traceable.

"If people do come into contact with what they suspect is stolen property they should alert police.

"Stolen items marked with Smartwater will be extremely easy for the police to identify and people purchasing stolen goods face prosecution themselves."



Hands up: Beat officer PC Ray Bradley demonstrates the Smartwater system to students Hannah Middleton, Georgia Gilbert, Matthew Martin and Daniel Fraser