Good morning everyone, and welcome to Plymouth Marine Laboratory.

My name is Tim Smyth, and I'm PML's Director of Science. It's a real pleasure to welcome all of you joining us from schools across the UK for Protecting Our Planet Day.

And this year is particularly special for us, because the ocean is the star of the show.

Here at PML, our job is to understand the ocean, how it is changing, why that matters for all of us, and, most importantly, what we can do to protect it.

And we study it at almost every possible scale. We look at some of the smallest living things on Earth, microscopic phytoplankton, which you can't see individually with your eyes. But we also look down on the whole planet from hundreds of kilometres above us, using satellites orbiting in space.

In fact, PML has worked with the European Space Agency for many years, using satellites to understand things like the colour of the ocean, phytoplankton, carbon and how our seas are responding to climate change. ***So although we're marine scientists, quite a lot of our science actually starts in space.***

But you'll also see today that protecting our planet takes much more than satellites. It takes people working on ships, in laboratories, underwater, with robots and computer models, and people coming up with entirely new ways of looking at problems.

And that's perhaps the most important thing I'd like you to take away from today. ***Science isn't just something you learn at school. It's something that you can do.*** *The people you're going to meet today were once sitting in classrooms just like you, wondering what they might do when they grew up.*

So ask questions. Be curious. And if something you see today makes you think, I'd like to do that, remember that thought. Perhaps one day some of you will be the scientists helping us understand and protect our planet.

From everyone here at PML, have a fantastic Protecting Our Planet Day, and welcome to Plymouth!