"Next time, maybe I can help my mother with the toilets at home!"

– Manfred Ho (above), 11, Primary 6, Xishan Primary School

"It's fun, because we can paint and draw something big that everyone can see when they use the toilet."

– Oh Jin An (above), 11, Primary 6, Xishan Primary School

"I saw that Yishun Primary School's toilets were beautiful. When I came back, I hoped that ours would be more beautiful – and they are."

– Low Zi Cong, 11, Primary 6, Xishan Primary School

"The toilet will be cleaner for my schoolmates now."

– Lim En Wei (below), 11, Primary 6, Xishan Primary School

PHOTO: CHEW SENG JIN

It is a case of happy toilets, happy students for Xishan Primary School, thanks to toilet patrollers like (from left) Jonathan Seow, Manfred Ho, Toh Li Yi and Poh Xin Yi, all 11 years old and in Primary 6.

What a lovely loo!

Toilets may be where you do your business, but that is no reason for them to be boring. BY CHUAH YII WEN

Cool loo cubicles with colourful pop art paintings covering their doors, potted plants mounted on the walls, spotless floors and clean sinks – these bathrooms might well have been those of a hotel's.

Welcome to Xishan Primary School's beautiful toilets.

The school is one of the 150 primary and secondary schools that participated in the Happy Toilet School Education programme rolled out by the Restroom Association of Singapore (RAS) two years ago.

All 195 Primary 6 Xishan students have been involved in the project since May last year.

It is a 20-month commitment for each student – and does not end just with pretty toilets.

In fact, that is just the beginning.

After the 50 specially appointed "toilet decorators" spruced up 10 toilets with a new coat of paint, Primary 6 "toilet managers" took the reins.

They were put in charge of checking the cleanliness of their assigned toilet daily.

Each student was given a checklist that included everything from the wetness of floors to the supply of toilet paper.

They report any dirty toilet to the cleaners.

RAS assistant project manager Teresa Chua explained: "This inculcates a sense of ownership and pride in the students, which translates into better user behaviour."

Teacher Noelle Kong, 28, agrees. She feels that the project helps build positive character traits in her students.

She adds that "they were very persistent and diligent in completing the project".

Decorating toilets was no easy matter. Before embarking on wall-painting, students brushed up on their skills with an art enrichment course taught by LaSalle-SIA graduates. They stayed back after school to complete the work in three months.

Primary 6 pupil Toh Li Yi, 11, enjoyed herself.

She said: "I got to do hands-on painting, and now I'm very proud of my school's toilets."

Students are also aware that keeping toilets clean requires more than a one-off paint job.

Said Primary 6 pupil Andy Lim, 11, a toilet manager who keeps tabs on the condition of toilets: "If the toilets are dirty and smelly, my schoolmates would not want to go. They would rather wait until they get home."

RAS is encouraging more schools to jump on the bandwagon.

"Clean restrooms are very important; it's about personal and social hygiene. Students should cultivate these good habits from a young age," said Ms Chua.