

Forest School Newsletter

What is it all about?

Our aim is to provide a child-centred, learner inspired, hands on experience in the natural environment. We want to give the children the opportunity to be creative, to problem solve and learn to manage risk while increasing their confidence and self-worth.

Forest school is a system of education whereby the majority of learning takes place out of doors, no matter the weather! If cold or wet, children simply dress accordingly. The ethos behind this system of schooling is that it is child-led with open-ended adult-guided activities. Free-range discovery is promoted, encouraging deep and meaningful connections with one another and the environment.

What have we been doing?

We are so lucky to have the park adjoining our school field and gate access so we can make the most of the natural wooded area. We regularly go off site and this term we have been using the area for bird spotting and helping the RSPB with their, "Schools Big Bird Count," learning about our garden birds, why the numbers are declining and how we can help and encourage them into our gardens/balconies. You may have noticed our homemade fat balls hanging around the schools and the birds (and squirrels) they are attracting. Some of the children have been fascinated by the old nests we can see high up in the trees and how well made they are to withstand some of the gales this year. We have experimented with making our own replica bird nests and animal dens.

Last week, we went to investigate the signs of spring. We went on a nature walk through the park that is adjoined to the school. During the session the children could see that the River Gade had burst its banks and were fascinated by the flooding. At the end of the session we went to investigate, learning about the River Gade being one of the very few chalk streams that exist worldwide and the important habitats for wildlife, supporting a massive range of plants and animals. We also discussed that the river channel is perched above the bottom of the valley and so during periods of heavy rain, water can become trapped in the floodplain, as it can't flow back into the river, which is at a higher level.

We have been looking after our flower beds and those green fingered among us have been busy weeding and getting the beds ready for sowing after Easter. The beds outside the year 4 classrooms are particularly colourful at the moment full of daffodils and primroses, one of our first signs of spring that we have been looking out for. We can see that our bug hotel is welcoming its first new guests and there are a lot more creepy crawlies to investigate, study and sketch now that the frosts have disappeared.

The den building and mud kitchen activities along with our 'team work' rope swing are still some of the most popular activities alongside creating bubble wands out of willow branches to dip in bubble mixture and whittling sticks to create bow and arrows.

Out in all weather!

The mud is slowly drying out but please continue to send your children to school in old clothes that can get dirty and spare socks are always useful. We will continue to wear trousers or leggings through the summer term rather than shorts to protect our legs from nettles and brambles and sun cream that the children can apply themselves and a sunhat as the weather warms up.



