

Forest School Report – RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

Date: 15 January 2026

Beech & Cedar Classes

The session began at the fire circle, where the children confidently revisited Forest School rules and boundaries from last term. Songs and games were used to reinforce expectations, helping the children to warm up, refocus, and quickly settle back into the Forest School routine.

The children were introduced to the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch and took part in a bird hunt, searching the Forest School site for hidden toy birds. They explored enthusiastically and showed excellent curiosity and teamwork while locating them.

Once all birds were found, the children learned their names and listened to their different calls. They compared colours and discussed how each bird sings differently. Some children used the toy birds to role-play, while others created nests using natural resources found around the site.

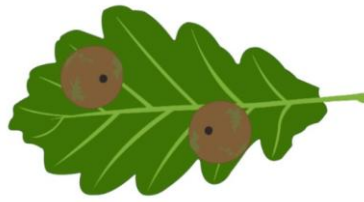
Several children independently chose to feed the real birds, carefully filling feeders with sunflower seeds and raisins. This led to an exciting observation as jackdaws watched eagerly from the trees, creating natural opportunities to discuss bird behaviour.

The children used information books to help identify birds they could see and hear. Cedar class showed exceptional patience and calmness when attempting to coax jackdaws closer by holding bird food in their hands, standing quietly and still.

Fine motor skills were developed as some children used secateurs to cut up an old Christmas tree. The cut twigs were reused by other children for nest building, demonstrating sustainability and shared use of resources.

Children also explored the vegetable garden, taking the opportunity to dig before planting begins later in the term.

The session concluded back at the fire circle, where the children reflected on their activities and shared new bird facts they had learned. The session ended with a bird song, creating a calm and positive close to the day.



Elm Class

Elm class also began their session by revisiting fire circle rules and boundaries. The discussion then focused on caring for the environment and understanding why protecting the world we live in is important. The children thoughtfully considered the impact litter can have on wildlife.

Inspired by this, the children took part in a rubbish hunt around the Forest School site and school grounds. They worked hard and took great pride in improving their environment. One child suggested creating a playtime or lunchtime litter-picking club, which was warmly received by the class.

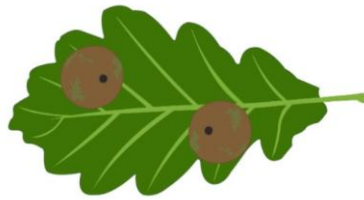
The children then explored the birds that inhabit the Forest School site. They looked skyward, listened carefully, and matched what they heard to pictures and toy bird replicas. The children played bird calls and listened to see if any real birds responded.

Using the Merlin Bird App, the children listened to and attempted to identify bird sounds around the site. Although no birds landed close enough to observe directly, the children were highly engaged in listening and identifying species using the app.

This learning inspired the children to build their own nests. To challenge them further, they were asked to build using only one hand, reflecting how birds use their beaks. Working in pairs, the children selected suitable nest locations and gathered natural materials such as sticks, grass, leaves, and mud. The toy birds were placed into the nests to test their designs.

Many children were so engaged that they continued nest building during playtime. Some also chose to record the birds they had seen around school, showing excellent initiative and interest.

The session ended with a group reflection, sharing activities and bird knowledge. The children worked incredibly hard and showed great enthusiasm throughout.



Oak Class

The Oak class session began with a discussion about appropriate clothing for Forest School, as several children had forgotten their outdoor wear. This led to a valuable conversation about preparation and safety.

The children then focused on data collection for the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, discussing why this information is important. They explored reasons why bird populations may increase or decline, including habitat changes, disease, and seasonal feeding needs.

Using bird information books and recording sheets, the children spent time sitting quietly and observing birds around the school grounds. This was a new and exciting experience for many, allowing them time to truly notice wildlife around them. The children were particularly fascinated when they observed blackbirds interacting in nearby bushes.

Birdwatching took place across different areas of the school, including the Forest School site, Father's garden, and the mud kitchen area. The children identified different species in each location, including jackdaws, great tits, robins, and blackbirds.

This led to thoughtful discussions about habitats, with children noting that jackdaws prefer open spaces where they can gather, while smaller birds seek shelter in trees and bushes for protection.

The session ended with a group discussion about ways to encourage more birds into the school grounds and how to be responsible data collectors for the RSPB. The children are excited and eager to begin official birdwatching next week.