



27th January 2023

Newsletter No.9

Dear Parents and Carers,

This weekend is of course the annual Big Garden Birdwatch, and if you wish to find out more about it do click on the link below which explains how you and the children can sign up and take part in this very important event.
<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/>

In assembly this week, lead by our Eco lead Miss Osborn, the children discovered how the numbers of birds in the UK on the red/ green and amber watch lists has altered over time following the second world war up until present day. The children were fascinated to see these changes and the children in Goldfinches class were delighted to learn that, for reasons unknown, the numbers of goldfinches has barely changed and they have remained safely on the green list over this time. Miss Osborn explained how the changing environment over these years impacted the numbers of some birds, putting some perilously close to extinction. It is only through the help of programmes like the Garden Birdwatch that these numbers can be so closely monitored and underlying reasons identified, so do take part and to be honest, there is no more lovely thing than spending a quiet hour at the kitchen window looking out for birds in the garden. We look forward to revisiting this in the coming weeks to hear from the children about their findings.

In a previous assembly, we discussed the advent of Spring by looking out for signs of Spring bulbs beginning to flower in our gardens and parks. The children's knowledge of flowers was impressive and they have been delighted to tell me all about their 'Spring Detective skills' as they have found the first flowering snowdrops, crocuses and ever growing daffodil stems around and about Sawston. Hopefully the current cold snap will end soon and we will all start to benefit from some lovely Spring colour.

On that note, you may have noticed a significant improvement in our outdoor garden beds in recent months. Mrs Ekaterina Rudenko began work at The Bellbird last year as our gardener. Since beginning, she has worked tirelessly on the school allotment to make it a more attractive, manageable and productive area (which has been very helpful for the gardening club), improved the KS1 outdoor area for the children to enjoy their play and learning and is now working on the 2 areas at the front of school, including wrapping up some of the more vulnerable plants from the bitterness of the cold. We are incredibly lucky to have such a dedicated and knowledgeable staff member.

Unfortunately we do still have many winter viruses around amongst the children so personal hygiene is of utmost importance; catch the sneeze in a tissue, bin the tissue and clean your hands continues to be our motto!

A little plea about playtime snacks—please can we remind you that children must only bring in fruit for morning snack. Unfortunately we have noticed recently an increase in the number of children who have non fruit snacks eg granola bars, lentil crisps etc and some children have been noted taking items from their packed lunch. We would be grateful for your support in this matter please.

Do have a look at the accompanying newsletter from the eco team which is full of information about what the team have been looking in to.

Please do have a look at the updated diary dates on the last page and especially the date change for our Mother's Day event.

With kind regards,

Mrs Kendall and Mrs Pentney

News from the Bellbird School Eco-Committee

In September 2021 we formed an Eco-Committee at the Bellbird Primary School. This was a very popular role and many children were passionate about being actively involved in the Eco-Committee. The first decision the Eco-Committee made was decide on three topics to focus on. We choose **Water, The School Grounds** and **Biodiversity**. The Eco-Committee started looking at ways to encourage their peers to reduce water waste and turn the taps off. In Key Stage 2 classes also completed a simple questionnaire about 'Winter Wildlife' and went out and observed the lichen, plants, insects and animal life they could see in the School Grounds.

In Spring 2022 teachers choose which plants and seeds they would like to plant later in the Spring and Summer. The children in the Eco-Committee pruned and dug and prepared parts of the Allotment area. Many of the children were really knowledgeable and passionate about caring for wildlife on the school grounds. (We particularly liked how the ivy is good for bees during winter.)

In Summer 2022 the Eco-Committee children went to the School Pond and Wildlife Area to study this and if there was any way we could improve it, as shown in the photograph below.



In Autumn 2022 the Eco-Committee discussed what they had achieved over the course of the year and thought about the next steps to promote sustainability and bio-diversity at the Bellbird Primary School. As part of this we launched a 'Water Week'. During classes 'Outdoor and Adventurous Learning' time children created 'pupil-pipe-lines' as a class seeing how far they could transport water as a team over set distances.

Spring 2023! We will be encouraging all children to take part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch on the 27- 29th of January. If you are able to take part in this the Eco-Committee would love to see your results.

School Term Dates:

Autumn term 2022

Last day of term: Wednesday 21st December 2022

Spring term 2023

Professional Day: Wednesday 4th January 2023 (Staff only)

Term Starts: Thursday 5th January 2023

Half term: 13th – 17th February 2023

Last day of term: Friday 31st March 2023

Summer term 2023

Term Starts: Monday 17th April 2023

May Day: Monday 1st May 2023

Half term: 29th May – 2nd June 2023

Last day of term: Wednesday 19th July 2023

Diary dates:

Spring term dates	Event
Week beginning 23 rd January	Year 4 bikeability (details to follow)
1st February	Teacher Strike day—Information to be released nearer the date
2nd February	Year 1 walk around Sawston
8th February	Year 4 visitor—Dr Sean Lang Historian
9 th February	Year 4 sharing assembly: 9.10 – 10.00am
22nd February	Year 2 Tower of London trip
1st March	Year 4 Trip to West Stow
1st March	Teacher Strike day—Information to be released nearer the date
2nd March	Author visit—Robyn Wilson
14th March	Year 3 Colchester Zoo trip
15/16th March	Teacher Strike day—information to be released nearer the dates
DATE CHANGE March 19th	2:30pm Mothers Day event - Books and Biscuits in the children's classrooms
21 st March	Year 3 sharing assembly: 9.10 – 10.00am
21st March	Year 5 visit to Challis Museum
24 th March	Reports out to parents
28 th March	Parent consultations 8.00 – 11.00
30 th March	Parent consultation 3.30 – 7.00pm