

Sustainability Week 2026

Intent for the Week

Our recent Sustainability Week was a fantastic success across the whole of Ashleyhill multi academy trust. Centred around our core theme, **"Our Garden: Making Space for Friends,"** the week was designed to help the children understand what animals need to survive—food, water, and shelter—while exploring how human choices impact our local ecosystems.

Our ultimate mission was to bring sustainability to life. From exploring "hedgehog highways" to learning about eco-friendly construction, we wanted to show the children that "being green" isn't just a theory—it's a practical, joyful, and "can-do" way of living!

Hands-On Learning & Key Highlights:

Protecting Our Pollinators: The children learned how vital bees and butterflies are to our own food security. We discussed the challenges local species face due to modern urbanisation—such as fewer green spaces and disrupted travel routes—and how we can help.

Inspiring Success Stories: We explored the history and modern reintroduction of the UK Red Kite population. This inspiring success story empowered the children to reflect on how their own practical actions can protect nature and enhance local biodiversity.

Exciting Guest Speakers: We were incredibly fortunate to welcome several fantastic visitors to the schools. Experts from a local construction company, local charities, and a sustainable transport initiative delivered engaging workshops and talks that truly inspired our pupils.

A Wild Highlight! One of the absolute highlights of the week was a hands-on birds of prey workshop. The children loved getting up close with these magnificent UK birds while learning how we can protect their natural environments.

Eco-Superheroes Save the Day! Inspired by the week's events, the children unleashed their creativity to design their very own Eco-Superheroes!

From battling plastic pollution to planting new forests, these imaginative characters took on global environmental challenges. But the fun didn't stop at design! The children also crafted short, exciting stories detailing their superhero's daring missions to protect the planet. It was a wonderful way for them to apply what they had learned about sustainability and conservation in a truly imaginative way.

By focusing on pollinators, local habitats, and industry, we are incredibly proud of how our children embraced these hands-on activities to become passionate young conservationists!

Overview of Activities: EYFS and KS1

EYFS & KS1: Protecting Garden Friends (Bees, Butterflies, & Hedgehogs)

Modelling Pollination: Children physically modelled how insects transfer pollen between flowers using a simple game with pom-poms and chalk dust. They reflected on how their own lunchboxes would change if pollinators disappeared.

Clay Crafting for Pollinators: The children rolled out clay to design shallow water trays filled with pebbles, ensuring bees can drink safely without drowning. They also sculpted cylinder bee houses with small holes to provide nesting spaces for solitary bees to lay eggs.

Hedgehog Hotels & Water Stations: After listening to the story *'The Hedgehog and the Fence'*, children went outside to build "Hedgehog Hotels" using twigs, dry leaves, and logs against walls and tree roots. Shallow plant saucers were also set out as freshwater stations.



Bees and butterflies help pollinate the flowers and help them to grow.

Year 1

Humans put up new fences and the hedgehogs can't get through.

Year 2

Solitary Bees are all on their own so they could live in the bee bricks to stay safe.

Barnaby Year 1

To help garden creatures like hedgehogs, you should leave them alone. Give them lots of food. I will build them a hotel somewhere quiet and away from children.

Year 2

When people cut the grass it may destroy the home of an insect.

Year 2

Overview of Activities: KS2

KS2: Hedgehog Highways & Biodiversity Bio-Blitz

School Perimeter Audit: Armed with aerial maps, clipboards, and highlighters, KS2 students walked the school boundaries. They marked "wild good areas" in green and "barriers" (like solid fences and concrete walls) in red to design a blueprint for a *School Hedgehog Highway* featuring 13cm x 13cm gaps.

1 Square Metre Ecosystem Survey: Using a 1-metre loop of rope, groups tallied the variety of plants, weeds, and insects living in different patches of the school grass to evaluate and compare biodiversity.



Victorians used to view Red Kites as scary and dangerous to their farms but now we want to protect them and we let them breed.

Lizzie Year 5

Hedgehog highways allow the hedgehogs to come into the garden to get food and then leave again.

Daisy Year 6

There was more biodiversity in the dip than the rest of the field because it has less people in there.

Eve Year 5

Some people's gardens have fake grass and materials which could hurt the hedgehogs.

Jenna Year 6

We have a lot of variety of flowers and insects on our field. There are different food sources for the hedgehog like insects.

Zac Year 6

Birds of Prey & Red Kite Conservation

One of the highlights of the week was a 'birds of prey' experience. The children were delighted to see first hands these stunning birds, including: a speckled owl, a harris hawk and a peregrine falcon. Each class experiences a lively and informative workshop and at the end of the day the children were treated to a flying display.

Inspired by the birds of prey workshops, the children explored the massive 1.8-metre wingspan of the Red Kite by chalking giant outlines on the playground and measuring how many children could fit inside. Younger students replicated scavenger behaviours by flying across the field to gather prey pictures.

KS2 students examined historical data to plot the tiny, isolated areas in Wales where Red Kites could be spotted in the 1980s, contrasting it against modern present-day reintroduction ranges across the UK. They celebrated the success of the reintroduction programme in growing Red Kite numbers across the UK.

Citizen Science Sightings: Equipped with clipboards, children conducted a "Sky Watch" on the school field, keeping a tally chart of bird sightings across 10-minute intervals to convert into bar graphs back in class.



Farmers used to kill Red Kites because they thought they were hurting their animals
Sophie Year 1

Red Kites have a forked tail and other birds don't and their wings at 1.8m long.

Frazer Year 1

Some birds are closer to extinction than I thought.
Elsie Year 6

We got to see owls and the fastest bird (Peregrin Falcon). We also saw a hawk. We saw a bird called Ronnie!
Ronnie Year 2

I think the birds need more help in the wild because the world is changing. Motorways are built over their habitats.
Year 6

Impact statement:

The vibrant energy of the week has been beautifully captured on our brand-new shared corridor display board which features the children's collaborative mixed-media artwork, citizen science data bar charts, ecosystem surveys, and hedgehog blueprint maps.

Beyond the physical displays, the true legacy of this week lies in how it has reshaped our pupils' mindsets, fostering a lifelong dedication to the planet:

Shifting from "Eco-Anxiety" to "Eco-Agency": Instead of feeling overwhelmed by global environmental challenges, our children learned that their local actions have an immediate, measurable impact. Building a "Hedgehog Hotel" or mapping a 13cm × 13cm highway gap proved to them that conservation is achievable, empowering them with a positive, solution-oriented mindset.

Become "Eco-Heroes": By stepping into the shoes of local wildlife—whether measuring out the wingspan of a Red Kite or imagining a lunchbox without bees—our pupils developed empathy for non-human species. They no longer view nature as something separate from us, but as an interconnected system that we have a responsibility to protect.

Fostering Critical Thinking & Green Careers: By connecting ecological surveys with real-world green construction and sustainable transport visits, students saw how sustainability bridges science, mathematics, and urban planning. We hope this has sparked early career aspirations by showing them that being eco-minded can open a multitude of opportunities for the children.

A huge thank you to Shanley Homes, Sophie Brookman (our sustainable transport advocate), Eco Warriors and to the stunning birds of prey for making this week an unforgettable success!

