

A close-up photograph of a swift in flight, showing its wings spread wide and its body streamlined. The bird is dark brown with lighter patches on its head and neck. It is flying against a clear, light blue sky.

BE INSPIRED BY.... CLAREMONT SCHOOL

STANDING UP FOR THE SWIFT

Is there anything that says summer is on its way more clearly than the arrival of the swift? In this article from Rob Campbell, Headteacher of Claremont Primary and Nursery School, we hear about how children and teachers embraced learning about sustainability and ecology through the humble swift.

In May this year the whole school came together to celebrate one of nature's wonders – the return of the swifts!

Here in Carrington, we're lucky enough to welcome these annual visitors to our local area and this year, instead of reading about them online, watching videos or talking about protecting them, we decided to get outside and walk the walk – literally.

We joined forces with WildNG – a local wildlife group – on their Swift Street programme, which is designed to create swift-friendly streets here in Nottingham to help reverse the decline in swift populations.

On 19 May, the chant "SAVE OUR SWIFTS" echoed through the streets as 390 of our children from years 1 to 6 marched from school to the Pirate Park waving banners and posters they'd made in class.

In the run up to the parade, we discussed the migration pattern of the swifts, learning about their biology and why it's vital for them to have nesting boxes up high – they have weak legs and can't propel themselves off the ground. Sustainability was a big focus of our lessons, and we talked a lot about why it's important to act locally but think globally.

This was a true cross-curricular activity that children could engage with in lots of different ways.

*Waywardly sliding and slinging,
Speed never slacking,
Easily, recklessly flinging,
Twinkling and tacking;
Oh, how we envy thee thy lovely swoerves!*

Extract from The Swift, by Wilfred Owen



It was a great opportunity to celebrate something special about our area of Nottingham as well as think about the need to continue to work hard to save rare and endangered species of animals.

Alongside the obvious learning outcomes, this was a way of unifying the school and showing the children the power of collective peaceful protest. We also got to interact with local residents, understand the importance of nature in an urban environment and learn about the wider impacts of climate change.

To follow up, we're looking into getting swift and bat boxes installed on the bell tower here at school – but as it's a listed building that might not be an easy task!



Read more and view video footage from the swift nesting boxes at www.facebook.com/swiftstreetnottingham

“IT'S IMPORTANT TO ACT LOCALLY BUT THINK GLOBALLY”

Reducing our footprint



As a school we always encourage children and staff to be aware of their environmental impact.



We walk to a lot of our local school trips and use public transport if we're going further afield. We've taken the tram to Nottingham University and the bus to the Galleries of Justice.



We encourage children to bring reusable water bottles and we have recycling bins in the playground.



We've installed LED lighting throughout the school using a DfE grant.

The Swift Parade was the first time we've done anything like this and we're not yet decided on whether we'll make it an annual event, but what I can say is that we'll definitely be building on the enthusiasm and passion shown by the children for sustainability and the environment.



Rob Campbell is Headteacher at Claremont Primary and Nursery School, a large two-form, multi-cultural school community of over 430 children, aged 3-11.

The school is located in the Carrington part of Nottingham, just over a mile from the centre of the city.

