

## A breath of fresh air

*Ann Favell, BBC Breathing Places Schools Project Officer at the RSPB, details a project that involves pupils getting outside the classroom to learn more about their natural surroundings.*

*“We have begun to appreciate the outside space we have at school.”*

A teacher talking about her school’s involvement with BBC Breathing Places Schools (BP Schools)

BBC Breathing Places Schools aims to encourage schools across the UK to create small areas for wildlife in their school grounds. Launched in January 2008, it not only benefits biodiversity but acts as a fun and engaging way for pupils to learn about nature from first hand experience. We now have over 10,000 schools signed up and taking part.



*“What worked particularly well was doing one thing at a time – when you have lots of ideas it’s hard to choose what to do”*

*BP Schools Teacher*



The premise of BBC Breathing Places Schools is simple – each school term we ask schools to ‘Do One Thing’ for nature in their grounds. There is a different theme for each term. Seed planting, minibeasts, feeding wildlife and wildlife homes have been covered so far. The ‘Do One Thing’ activity for this term ‘Make a Splash for Nature’ encourages teachers and pupils to create a water habitat for wildlife in a small watertight container – it could be a mini pond or a mini bog garden – both of which have benefits for biodiversity and are fun, safe and easy to make.

A free activity pack and giveaways are sent to schools when they register to take part on the BBC Breathing Places Schools website. Step-by-step teaching notes and relevant activity sheets are available to download from the website to help teachers bring the subject to life. Past topics are archived on the site and can be dipped into whenever required. Teachers can do as little or as much as they wish and all work can be carried out both in a school with lots of green space as well as one with just a

concrete playground. There are also links highlighting where the Breathing Places Schools work will fit in with the curriculum.

*“It widens the children’s interest and teaches them about nature and what fun they can have”*

*BP Schools Teacher*

We work with a partnership of over 40 different conservation and education organisations across the UK to develop the ‘Do One Thing’ activities. These partner organisations have brought a wealth of experience, skills and knowledge to BBC Breathing Places Schools and have helped to make this initiative a special and engaging project for everyone involved.



This autumn, we are launching our sixth topic of work to our registered schools. ‘Trees for Wildlife’ will include a free rowan tree giveaway as well as all sorts of tree-related information, activities and ideas for teachers to carry out with their pupils. So if you are an interested teacher or know of a school who would like to take part, it’s never too late to get started doing something for nature and biodiversity. Teachers can go to the website to register their school and start doing one thing for nature.

*To find out more or to register your school please go to:*

[www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/schools](http://www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/schools).

*Photos: Paul Langshaw*