

## Looking at Life Cycles!

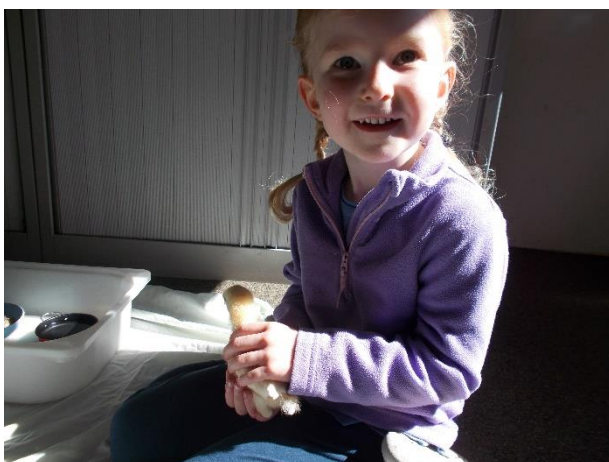
The summer months at Hambledon Nursery School provide ample opportunities to get outside in nature and observe the changes that take place in the growth of plants and animals. The children have been looking at different life cycles in their learning throughout June.

We have been pond-dipping and looking for signs of frogs at the nursery as we have been learning about the life cycle. Children found tadpoles and newts and gently and carefully began to understand the need to respect and care for our natural environment at the nursery and the living things they found there.



The children have watched eggs hatch from an incubator in the classroom during the summer term, eagerly anticipating the day we expected the eggs to hatch, crossing off the days in a cracking count down. They are beginning to understand the key features of the life cycle of an animal- sequencing pictures to depict what they had the opportunity to experience first-hand.

As the weeks went by and the chicks grow bigger and developed feathers, the children were able to paint their observational pictures of them for our classroom display to record the stages this fascinating lifecycle.



The children also enjoyed handling the chicks when they grew bigger and allowing them to perch on their feet. They were fascinated by how quickly the chicks grew,

they named them of course, there was 'Beaky', 'Sparkles Unicorn', 'Fluffy' and 'Beaky-Boy' for example and all the children could talk about what they had seen, used a widening vocabulary to describe the changes.



There has also been the life cycle of butterflies to enjoy. The delivery in the post of a box of tiny caterpillars to the nursery was particularly exciting one day. The children watched as the caterpillars ate the nutrient paste provided in the container and grew fatter and noticeably bigger day by day. Once the caterpillars had formed chrysalis the children were careful not to disturb them. Between 7 to 10 days later the thrilling transformation was complete and they hatched into 'Painted Lady Butterflies'. The children enjoyed watching the butterflies dry their wings and then fed them slices of oranges and sugar water for a couple of days before the big release into the nursery garden.



All these powerful and first-hand experiences, including planting cress seeds and growing broad beans and planting potatoes and herbs in the vegetable patch provide children with an appreciation of the natural world, of the cycles of change and growth that can be seen in nature.



They are learning that some life cycles happen rapidly over just days, others will take longer with changes happening over weeks or even months. As these life cycles happen the children respond to these experiences by using all their senses in hands-on exploration, they will talk about what they see, use a widening range of vocabulary and they will explore how things work and learn to care for living things, both plants and animals.