

St Mary's Eco Update

2026





Welcome to this years eco journey at St Mary's.
We are so proud of what we have achieved this
year and can't wait to share it with you.
Sustainability is at the heart of our school and our
eco journey reflects our commitment to creating a
greener future for our students and school
community.

Green Flag Award

An abstract graphic design featuring a dark teal background. On the right side, there are four large, rounded square shapes arranged in a 2x2 grid. The top-left and bottom-right shapes are a solid medium teal color. The top-right and bottom-left shapes are a darker teal color with a fine, dotted pattern. Additionally, there are three small circles: a light teal one in the upper right, a red one in the lower right, and a small dark teal one near the center-right.

Green Flag Topics

**school
grounds**





We would like to share with you some of the activities that we have completed to help us towards applying for our Green Flag Award and becoming an Eco School.

The background is a dark teal color. It features several large, rounded rectangular shapes in a lighter teal shade, arranged in a cross-like pattern. Some of these shapes have a fine, dotted texture. There are also three small circles: one light teal circle in the upper right, one red circle in the lower right, and one small dark teal circle near the center-right.

Waste and Recycling Around St Mary's School

Playground Waste Collection



Classroom Recycling Bin



PTA Recycled Uniform Collection Point

Recycled Batteries



Recycled Photocopier Cartridges



Playground Waste Collection



Lunch Waste Collection

Litter Free Lunch

This station is used to discard any uneaten food by the children that have hot school dinners.



Children who bring in a packed lunch are requested to take all their rubbish and waste home to help prevent littering and waste in and around the school grounds.

**Look how much litter we
have collected...**



Keep Britain Tidy – Great School Clean



We decided to take part in The Big School Clean. This is a special event where everyone in the school community worked together to help tidy and improve the school environment. During this time, pupils and staff teamed up to pick up litter, organise classrooms, freshen up shared areas, and make sure the school looked welcoming and cared for. It was a chance to show pride in our school, learn about responsibility, and make a positive difference to the place we learn in every day.

GREAT BIG SCHOOL CLEAN BADGE 2026
**SIGNED UP
AS A
SCHOOL**



The Aylesbury Wombles



As part of the Big School Clean, the Aylesbury Wombles visited our school and carried out a litter pick with each year group. The Aylesbury Wombles are a local volunteer group founded in 2019 by Abigail Walker, who wanted to make Aylesbury cleaner and greener. They regularly work across the community to remove litter, educate others about caring for the environment, and inspire people of all ages to take pride in keeping their local areas tidy.





The Aylesbury Womble's Social Media Post



Poster Competition

We also asked all children to help keep our school clean and tidy by designing a colourful poster that encouraged everyone to pick up litter. The poster could include messages about looking after our school grounds, as well as ideas about recycling and reducing waste. The best designs were displayed around the school to remind everyone how we can work together to care for our environment! Here are some of the designs.



We were in the process of upgrading the books in our library and felt that it was a good opportunity for some of the children in our school to benefit from this rather than us throwing them away. Small groups of children came and chose four books that they could take home and enjoy.





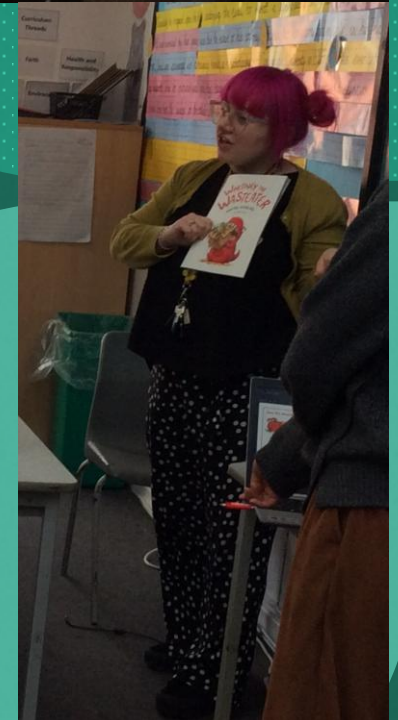
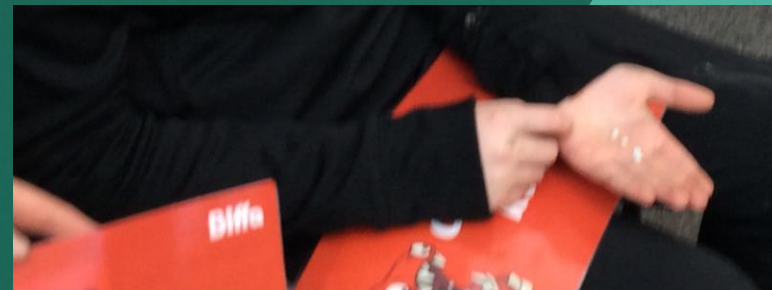
To support the ongoing upgrade of our school library, we organised a second fundraising event - this time a book sale for parents. By giving pre-loved books a new home, the event not only helped raise funds for new library resources but also encouraged families to think about the importance of reducing waste.

Biffa

Biffa Visit

Biffa, the waste management company, visited our school to talk to the children about the important work they do in collecting, sorting, and recycling waste to help protect the environment. They explained how rubbish is managed responsibly and how recycling helps reduce pollution and save resources. During the visit, Year 5 took part in a range of interactive activities, including sorting different materials into the correct recycling categories, exploring how landfill sites are managed, and trying out hands on challenges that showed how much waste can be reduced through simple everyday choices.





Place2Be's

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**9-15
FEB
2026**

Supporting and looking after children's mental health is vital, as it helps them feel safe, valued, and ready to learn and grow. During Children's Mental Health Week, our whole school came together to create a human rainbow in the playground, symbolising both unity and the importance of emotional wellbeing. Before this, we explored why it is important to care for one another, alongside learning how rainbows are formed and about different types of weather. This helped us to understand how, just like the weather, people's moods and feelings can change, and that it is important to show kindness, patience, and support during all emotional "weathers."





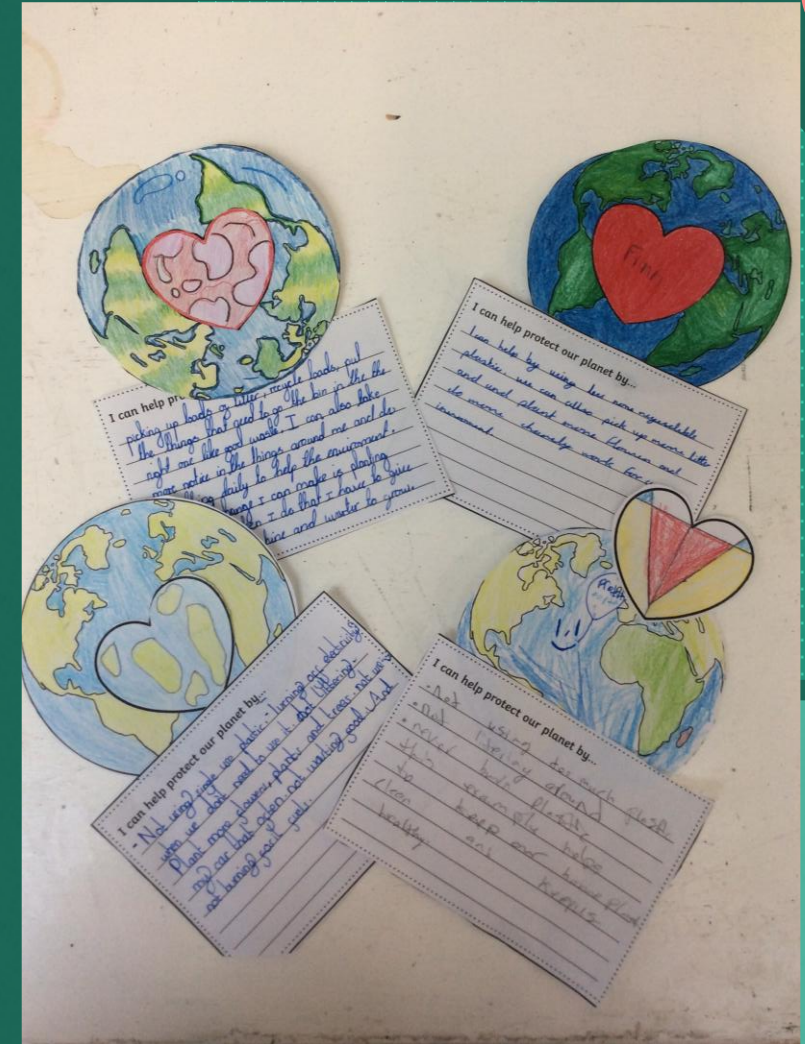
Year 1 children took part in a colouring and sticking activity using recycled paper. This was a fun and engaging way to help them understand how reusing materials can help to look after our planet by reducing waste. Through the activity, the children learned that paper can be given a new purpose instead of being thrown away, and they talked about simple ways they can care for the Earth.



On Earth Day, Year 2 took part in a creative activity to make the Earth by collecting old pictures from magazines, newspapers and other recycled materials. They carefully tore the paper into small pieces and worked together to create a colourful collages of the world. Through this activity, the children learned about the importance of recycling and how reusing materials can help reduce waste and protect our planet. They also discussed how small actions, like recycling paper, can make a big difference in caring for the Earth.



As part of Earth Day, Year 5 pupils wrote a pledge about how they are going to help save the planet. They spent time talking together and reflecting on how the actions of others can damage and destroy their world. Through these discussions, they learned that small choices could have a big impact and that everyone has a responsibility to care for the Earth. The children shared thoughtful ideas about how they can change their own behaviour to help protect the environment for the future.



🌍 HELP US CREATE AN 🌍 ECO-FRIENDLY ART PROJECT!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Our children are working on an exciting art project that promotes **recycling** and raises awareness about the impact of **single-use plastics** on our planet.

WHAT WE NEED:

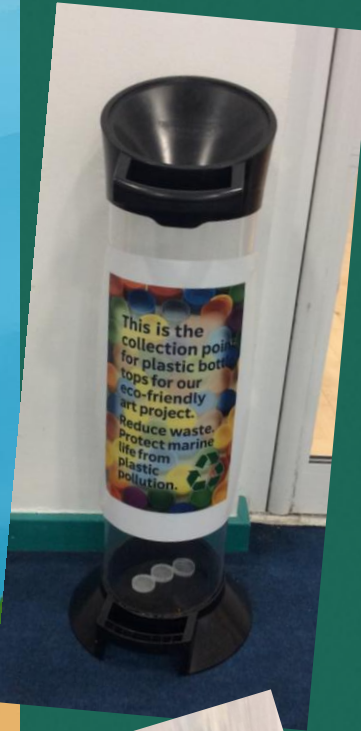
- ✔ Clean, washed plastic bottle tops (milk bottles, juice bottles, etc.)
- ✔ Please send them in with your child

WHY IT MATTERS:

Every year, millions of plastic items end up in our oceans, harming marine life and polluting ecosystems. By reusing these bottle tops, we can show the children how small actions make a big difference!

**LET'S TURN WASTE INTO ART
AND PROTECT OUR SEAS!**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



We decided as a school to complete an art project on Earth Day, using plastic bottle tops to help promote the importance of recycling and raise awareness of the impact plastic waste has on our oceans. By collecting and repurposing the bottle tops, we were able to see how everyday items can be reused in creative ways rather than thrown away. We also sent out this leaflet to all our families to help with the collection and support the children's learning.

The Eco Warriors sorting the plastic bottle tops into colours



Each child within the school visited the school hall to place their bottle top onto the picture.





Our Finished picture is displayed in our school hall.



We took part in this years Big School Bird Watch. We joined thousands of other schools to find out which birds visit our school grounds.

The Big Schools' Birdwatch is a simple bird survey that we took part in and enjoyed together. This activity was about counting the number of birds in our school grounds with in a given time. We monitored our Forest School for about 1 hour. The results contributed to the Big Garden Birdwatch – the world's largest wildlife survey.

Big Schools' Birdwatch



How to take part

Here's everything you need to know.

- Find the perfect spot to do your Big Schools' Birdwatch**
Why not put up some feeders in advance to encourage birds to visit? Just make sure you thoroughly clean all feeding areas at least once a week. You'll find full instructions here: rspb.org.uk/keep-your-garden-birds-healthy

For more activities to try before the Birdwatch, take a look at the links and downloads in your registration confirmation email to browse our specialist resources.

- Do your Birdwatch!**
Between 6 January and 13 February, use our ID resources and survey sheets to record the highest number of each species that you see at the same time. Use our historical datasheets to compare your sightings with the national results from previous years.

Teaching hint: Discuss why a tally chart doesn't work well when counting birds for Big Schools' Birdwatch. We need to make sure we don't count the same individual bird(s) more than once – so we start counting again from one each time we see a bird species.

- Tell us your results**
Complete the online form with your class by going to rspb.org.uk/schools/birdwatch. All results are useful, even if you don't see anything. Once you've submitted your class results, you'll receive a certificate to print out for your class, plus links to further resources.

The deadline for submitting your results is 23 February 2026.



Go for gold!
Your Birdwatch counts as an activity towards our Wild Challenge award. To find out more, scan the code or visit rspb.org.uk/learn/wildchallenge



Images: Ben Andrew (Inph-images.com)
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207016, Scotland no. SC039464 371 4035-25-26

Male Blackbird



Blackbird Length: 24cm Apple 8cm

Starling



Starling Length: 21cm Apple 8cm

Jackdaw



Jackdaw Length: 24cm Apple 8cm

Rook



Rook Length: 44cm Apple 8cm

Carrion Crow



Carrion Crow Length: 43cm Apple 8cm

Hooded Crow



Hooded Crow Length: 45cm Apple 8cm

Images: Mike Langman (Inph-images.com)
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207016, Scotland no. SC039464 371 4035-25-26

Black-headed Gull



Black-headed Gull Length: 34cm Apple 8cm

Lesser Black-backed Gull



Lesser Black-backed Gull Length: 33cm Apple 8cm

Herring Gull



Herring Gull Length: 34cm Apple 8cm

Great Black-backed Gull



Great Black-backed Gull Length: 44cm Apple 8cm

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207016, Scotland no. SC039464 Images: Mike Langman (Inph-images.com) 371 4035-25-26

What did you see?

Note down the highest number of each species that you see together at the same time. Work out a simple way to record how many you count. Why wouldn't you use a tally chart?

Name

	Woodpigeon		Female Blackbird
	Carrion Crow		Male House Sparrow
	Starling		Black-headed Gull
	Magpie		Blue Tit
	Robin		Feral Pigeon
	Great Tit		Female Chaffinch

Did you notice anything in particular about the birds you saw? Differences in how they moved or what they were doing? Or perhaps you managed to see and identify a bird not shown here? If so, note these things in the space on the back or on a separate sheet. For more information, scan the code or visit: rspb.org.uk/schools/birdwatch

Images: Mike Langman (Inph-images.com) 371 4035-25-26
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Your results are important!

Your Big Schools' Birdwatch results will help the RSPB to learn which birds are doing well and which are in trouble.

They will then work out what needs to be done to help those in need. They might suggest actions such as:

- Increasing the number of suitable places particular birds nest and live (habitats)
- Growing plants that provide food for these birds
- Providing habitats for the creatures that some birds eat



What did you see?

How many birds of the same kind did you count at the same time?

Name

	Female House Sparrow		Male Blackbird
	Blue Tit		Robin
	Starling		Woodpigeon
	Chaffinch		Magpie

For more information, scan the code or visit: rspb.org.uk/schools/birdwatch

Images: Mike Langman (Inph-images.com) 371 4035-25-26
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Bird Feeders

The children made bird feeders as part of the Big Schools' Birdwatch, helping them learn how we can all care for local wildlife. Before counting the birds, it was important to put food out to attract them, giving the birds a reliable place to feed and encouraging more species to visit. This helped the children get a better idea of the variety of birds living around our school.

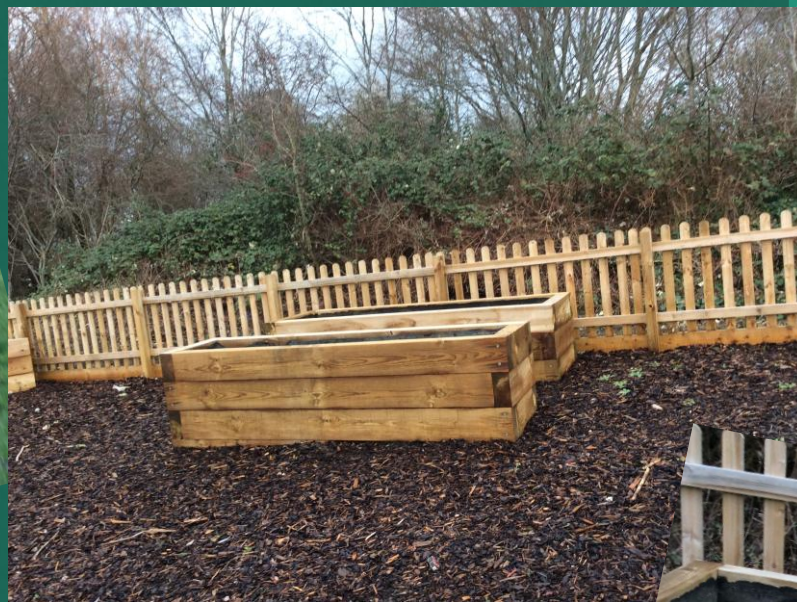


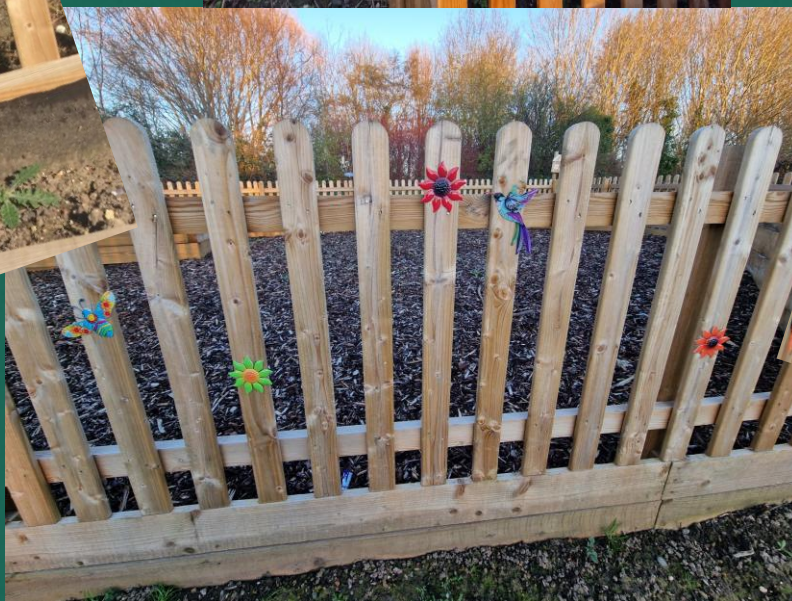
Sensory Garden





Our sensory garden project is an exciting initiative designed to create a calming and inclusive space for all members of our school community. The garden will feature a variety of plants chosen for their colours, textures, and scents, along with interactive elements such as tactile pathways and sound features to stimulate multiple senses.





Bring A Plant Mufti Day

We recently held a mufti day where children were invited to bring in a plant to help create our new school garden. Families kindly contributed a wonderful variety of plants, including sunflowers, lavender, strawberry plants, herbs such as mint and rosemary, and a range of colourful bedding flowers. Throughout the day, each class visited their designated year group area to plant the contributions they had brought.

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are excited to announce that we will be holding a Mufti Day on Friday 24th April 2024, and we would love your help to make it even special! Instead of a monetary donation, we're asking the children to bring along a small plant or a packet of seeds to support the creation of our brand new Garden.

Throughout the day, each class will enjoy a visit to the garden area, where the children will have the fun opportunity to plant their donation. We know they'll be proud to see something they contributed growing and flourishing in a space that the whole school enjoys.

Our Garden is being designed as a bright, welcoming place full of colour, interest, and discovery. It will offer all our children a calm, serene environment where they can learn about nature, explore their senses, and experience the joy of watching things grow. It will support wellbeing, encourage curiosity, and provide valuable learning opportunities about nature, growth, and caring for the world around us.

We would like to make the following suggestions for each year group to bring in:

Year	Any plants from the list below
Year 1	- Marigolds - Sunflowers - Peppercorns - Balsam Seeds - Hebe Fennel
Year 2	- Sunflowers - Marigolds - Tulips - Rose - Hebe Fennel - Lavender - Cherry - Nasturtium - Secret Pot
Year 3	- Strawberries - Potatoes - Cherry tomatoes - Hebe
Year 4	- Marigolds - Sunflowers - Peppercorns - Balsam Seeds - Hebe Fennel
Year 5	- Lavender - Rosemary - Mint varieties - Lemon balm - Scented geraniums
Year 6	- Let's eat - Self-seeds - Strawberries - Moss patches

We would also be grateful for any of the following items that could be used around the school to make it more attractive as well as in the garden:

- Painted planters
- Seeds
- Planting
- Mosses
- Wind chimes
- Bird feeders
- Bird bath
- Bug hotel

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you so much for your support and all the kind donations that we have already received. We can't wait to watch our garden flourish with the help of our pupils and your continued support.

Yours sincerely,
The Eco Warriors and Mrs Clark





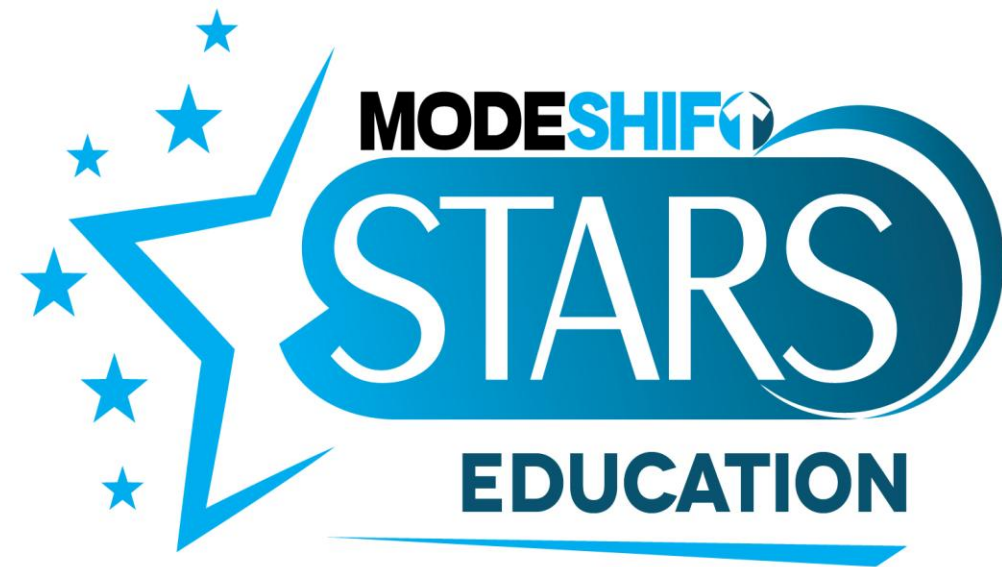
Nursery's Vegetable Patch

The background features a dark teal base with several large, rounded rectangular shapes in a lighter teal color. Two of these shapes have a fine dotted pattern. There are also three small circles: one light teal circle in the upper right, one red circle in the lower right, and one small dark teal circle near the bottom center.

Our nursery children have their own vegetable patch where they take care of and learn how to grow a range of different vegetables and flowers. They plant items such as carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, and peas, as well as flowers like sunflowers and marigolds. The children water the plants, watch them grow, and help to keep the area tidy.



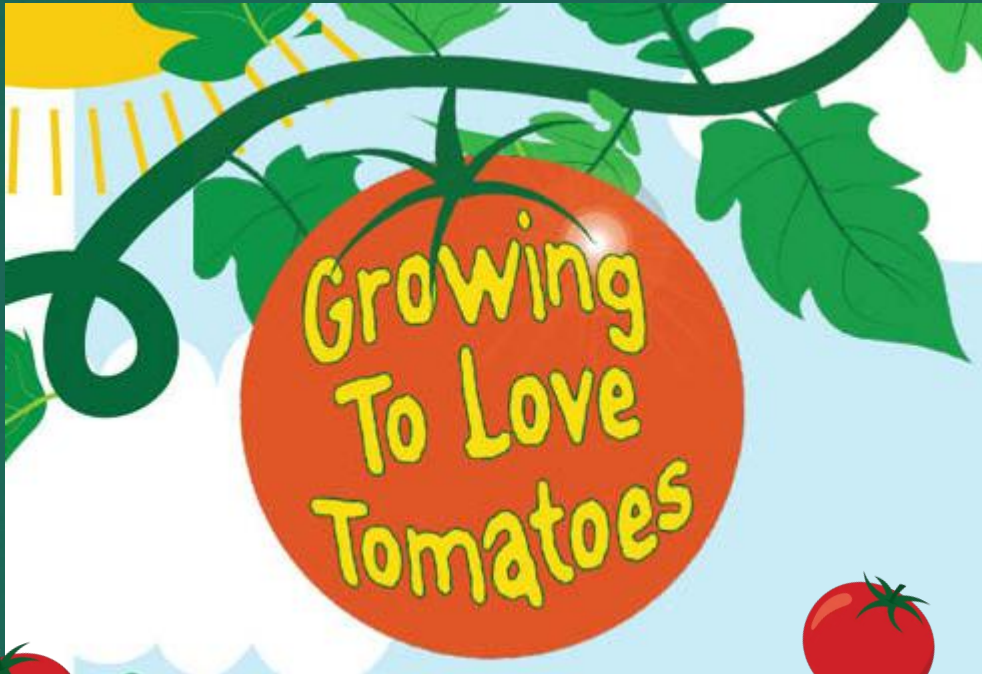
This year our school is proud to have achieved the Modeshift STARS Excellent Travel Plan Award, recognising our strong commitment to promoting sustainable travel. This achievement reflects the hard work of our whole community in encouraging safer, greener, and healthier journeys to and from school. We will continue to build on this success as we inspire our pupils and families to make more sustainable travel choices and inspire to support a healthier environment around our school gates.



EXCELLENT TRAVEL PLAN 2025/2026

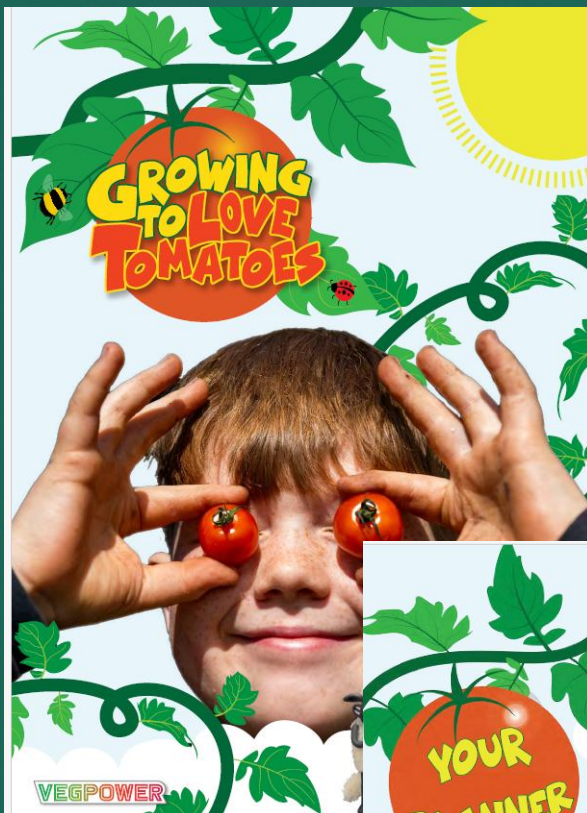
Veg Power





Growing vegetables encourages children to try the food they produce, fosters understanding of the food chain and sustainability, and encourages hands-on curriculum-based learning.

Growing to Love, is a project developed by behavioural scientists, teachers, and botanists, and featuring Shaun the Sheep, which shows children the joy of growing and tasting their own produce. Our Year 4 children decided to take part and enjoyed every minute of it.



WHY GROWING?

At Veg Power our mission is to get children eating more vegetables. We use play and creativity to inspire and empower children to make positive food choices. We want kids to love vegetables and one of the best ways to develop that love is through growing their own. Which is why we designed our fun growing project with help from behaviour change experts, educators, botanists, entertainers and gardeners, where the tomato plant will be at the centre of different learning opportunities and help deliver some curriculum goals.

Green thumbs up: How engaging kids in growing veg can lead to healthy habits

We all know how challenging it can be to encourage children to eat vegetables, and I am sure it is of no surprise to you that most children are not eating as many vegetables as health research suggests they should. Getting children involved in growing vegetables can not only reconnect them with both food and nature, but it can also be enjoyable and an excellent way to help them get excited about vegetables.

In fact, research shows that being involved in growing vegetables is a reliable way to decrease their reluctance to try vegetables as well as leading children to eat more vegetables. So why is eating vegetables so important? A diet rich in vegetables improves health and reduces risk of disease later in life. In addition, research shows that food preferences forged in childhood track through to adulthood, making children the perfect ones to get involved in food growing.

Science tells us that time spent in green space leads to greater wellbeing, aids relaxation, and decreases stress, low-mood, and anxiety. These benefits may be particularly powerful for neurodiverse children, such as children with Attention Deficit as those with mental health conditions. When children are outdoors, it can foster independence and autonomy, and lead to action, and pride. They can gain confidence and self-esteem when they take ownership of their plants and the time it can also help them to forge and strengthen relationships in with through cooperation towards a common goal.

Tomatoes have been proven to taste sweeter and far more so when they are grown by children. Children are more likely to eat tomatoes contain much greater quantities of antioxidants. Rerits meaning not only do they test better, but they are also

A step-by-step practical guide to growing tomatoes
GrowingToLove.com
Scan for activities, lesson plans, fun video tutorials and downloads

GROWING TO LOVE TOMATOES

Guide for parents and carers

Sharon the sheep and Shaun the sheep are trademarks of Acornham Animations Limited 2020.
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YOUR PLANNER

PLANNING - APRIL

For each stage of the growing project there are certain points you may want to think about planning now. Every stage from sowing the seeds to sending the plants home with the children has pages full of information, a checklist to help you map out your journey and a planner for all your notes.

- 28 page Teachers' Guide
- 32 x Grow chart and (plastic-free) sticker packs
- 6 x Propagation window sill kits with 5 sets of 4 seed cells
- 15 x Tomato seed packs
- 100 x Plant labels
- 1 x Bale of stage one seed sowing compost
- 1 x Bale of multi purpose repotting compost
- 1 x Bottle of organic vegetable feed
- 32 x Facemask craft project

If your delivery has not arrived by 13th April, please contact us via the platform of vegpower.org.uk/contact

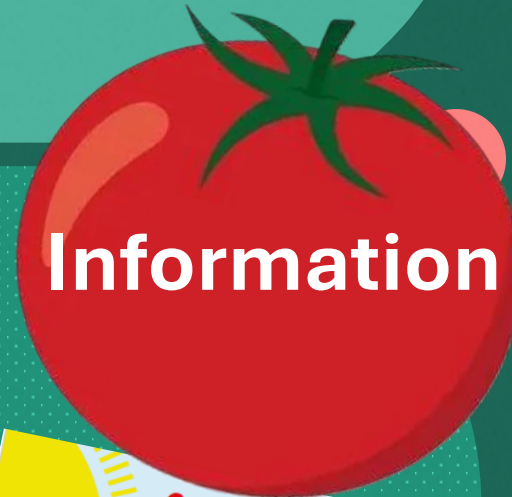
WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

2. From April to June, take care of your baby tomato plants and keep an eye out for seedlings. Turn to page 12 for tips on looking after your plants.

Caring

1. IMPORTANT: Ideally tomatoes should be planted in March, April is fine but please sow them as soon as possible after the Easter holiday to give them the best chance. Turn to page 8.

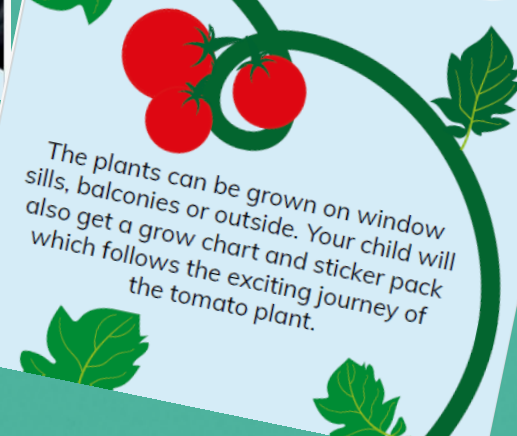
Sowing



Information

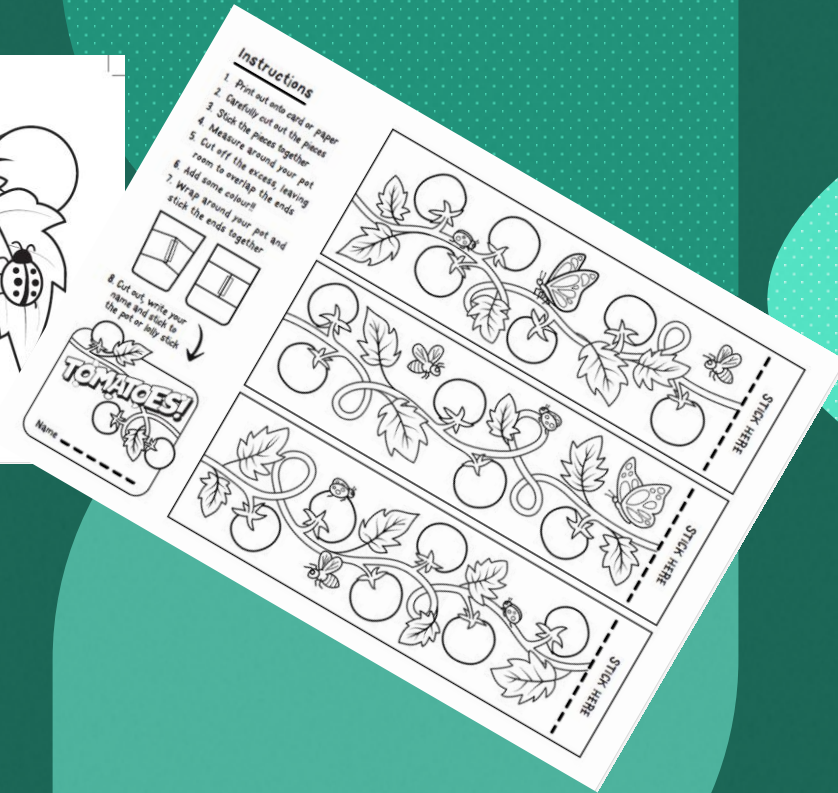
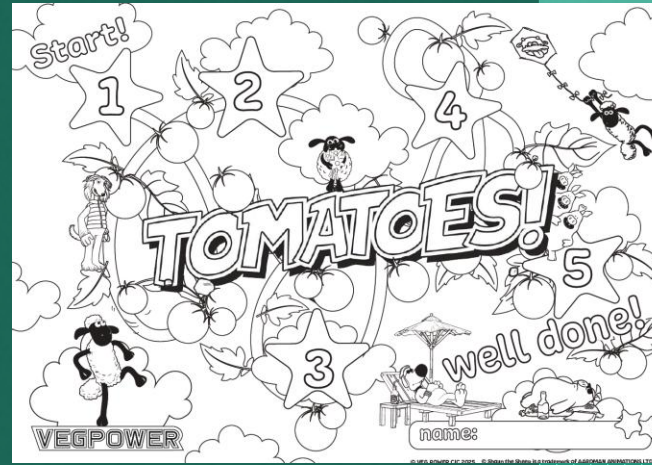
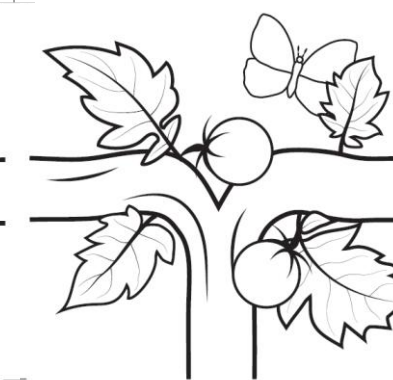
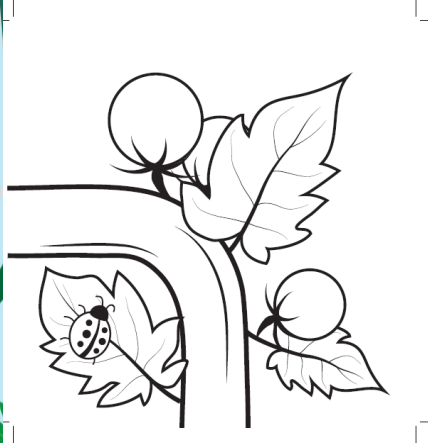
Calling all Parents and Carers!

This term your child will be growing their own tomatoes from seeds to fruit. Your little farmer will plant their tomato seeds in school in April and repot their tomato plants in to bigger (recycled) pots in June. They will then bring their plants home at the end of term to continue growing over the summer holidays with your support.



The plants can be grown on window sills, balconies or outside. Your child will also get a grow chart and sticker pack which follows the exciting journey of the tomato plant.

Activities





Our school gardening club provides children with the opportunity to learn how to grow and care for plants while developing valuable life skills. The children have taken part in activities such as planting seeds, watering and weeding beds, harvesting fruit and vegetables, and creating habitats for wildlife. Through these hands-on experiences, pupils learn about teamwork, responsibility, healthy eating, and the natural environment.

Tidying Year 1 Outside Area

Planting some seeds



Tending to Our Garden



Catalina



AFOA



Briony

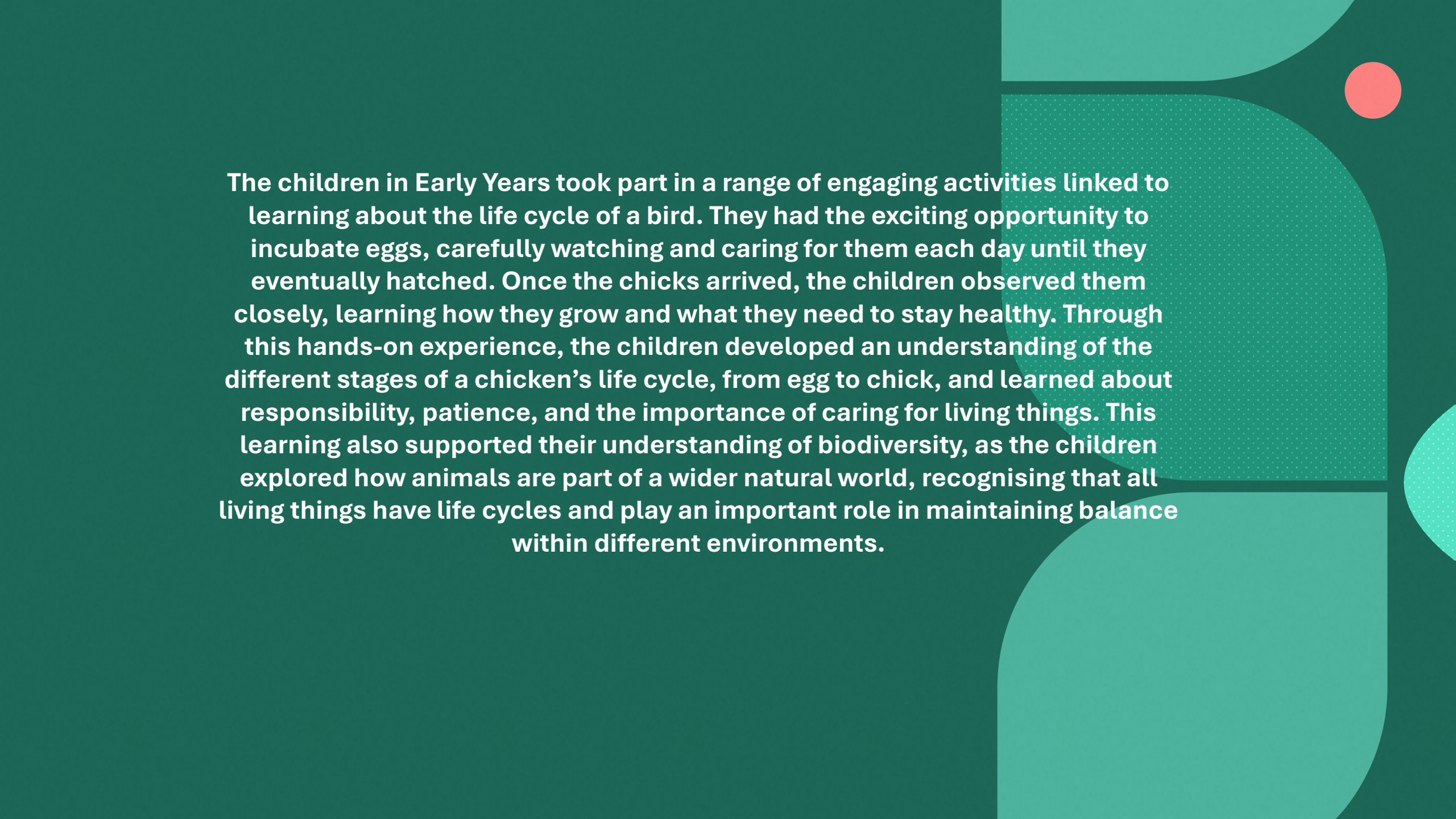


Shoe



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Watch the Chick Hatch!



The children in Early Years took part in a range of engaging activities linked to learning about the life cycle of a bird. They had the exciting opportunity to incubate eggs, carefully watching and caring for them each day until they eventually hatched. Once the chicks arrived, the children observed them closely, learning how they grow and what they need to stay healthy. Through this hands-on experience, the children developed an understanding of the different stages of a chicken's life cycle, from egg to chick, and learned about responsibility, patience, and the importance of caring for living things. This learning also supported their understanding of biodiversity, as the children explored how animals are part of a wider natural world, recognising that all living things have life cycles and play an important role in maintaining balance within different environments.

