

Living in such a beautiful area, we are very lucky to share our grounds with a wide variety of wild life. What used to be mainly a play area has been developed into a home for many wild species which now happily live alongside the children. Over the last couple of years, we have worked closely with a charity called the Avon Wildlife Trust to landscape our school environment, making it 'creature friendly'. One of the children's first projects was the 'butterfly garden'. British butterflies are in decline, predominantly because of their loss of natural habitat, so we planted lots and lots of wild flowers -many purple which they love - to attract native species. Although last summer was really wet, we saw many more butterflies than we had ever done before. A real success! The children were also fully involved in the planting of a marsh garden within our conservation area. Our aim was to extend the range of life in and around the pond. The children were thrilled to find a grass snake who had taken refuge under an old piece of roof!

Each term, a group of children known as 'eco warriors', meet to discuss issues relating to Eco-schools. As one of their actions, they have monitored various areas within our grounds to observe if the changes we are making, are actually affecting the biodiversity around the school. Each term the 'eco warriors' work in pairs to record the wildlife in their allocated area. At the end of the school year they will present their findings to all the children, teachers and parents. They will also publish their results in the school newsletter and community magazine.

We are sure that many creatures are being attracted to set up home within our school grounds, even if we haven't seen them, it's just a case of finding evidence of them - after all, most creatures are very shy and some are nocturnal. One of our youngest eco warriors, 6 year old Tom, suggested that we build a hide so that we can observe animals without disturbing them; we think this is a brilliant idea and are sure that our parents will help us construct one! In February, the Key Stage 2 children will be taking part in a science evening. They will come back to school when it's dark and with the help of bat detectors, will monitor the activity of bats. As yet our bat boxes do not have any inhabitants and we want to establish why this is! Hopefully we will find that hedgehogs are living in our newly constructed hedgehog boxes. Our bio-diversity project is still quite new but is very exciting. Outdoor learning is great fun and the children in our school love to explore the richness of their school grounds.

P.S. As I was writing this article, 9 year old Steven came into the office with a box that he had built as a home for frogs and toads! This will take pride of place alongside the marsh garden.