Investigating Giant African Land Snails

November 2024

The children in nursery have been looking after each other and helping to take care of the environment. This led us to introduce our African Land Snails who normally live in the corridor, and to extend the children's learning by enabling them to understand the need to respect and care for the natural environment and all living things. Some of the children talked about seeing snails in their garden and we talked about what they like to eat and how they felt. We also looked to see how the snails moved and what body parts they have. We washed their shells with brushes and talked about how the children got clean. The children were interested in the snails coming out and going back inside their shells and noticed if they touched their bodies they would go back inside. We looked at information books and the story 'Snail Trail' by Ruth Brown. We also talked about the snails having a spiral shell and we drew spiral pictures. Cassie our snail expert came to visit the children, she talked about how to look after them and the children helped to make a habitat for the snails.

Links to EYFS

Communication and Language

Listening, Attention & Understanding

Birth to 3

Listen and respond to a simple instruction
Understand simple instructions like "give to mummy" or "stop".
Listen to other people's talk with interest, but can easily be distracted by other things
Identify familiar objects and properties for practitioners when they are described: for example: 'Katie's coat', 'blue car', 'shiny apple'.
Understand and act on longer sentences like 'make teddy jump' or 'find your coat'.
Understand simple questions about 'who', 'what' and 'where' (but generally not 'why').
Understand simple instructions like give to mummy or stop

3-4 years

Understand a question or instruction that has two parts, such as "Get your coat and wait at the door".
Understand 'why' questions, like: "Why do you think the caterpillar got so fat?"

Reception

Understand how to listen carefully and why listening is important

Speaking

Birth to 3

Copy your gestures and words.
Start to develop conversation, often jumping from topic to topic.

3-4 years

Use a wider range of vocabulary.
Use longer sentences of four to six words.
Be able to express a point of view and to debate when they disagree with an adult or a friend, using words as well as actions.
Start a conversation with an adult or a friend and continue it for many turns.

Physical Development

Fine Motor Skills

Birth to 3

Develop manipulation and control.
Explore different materials and tools.

3-4 years

Use one-handed tools and equipment, for example, making snips in paper with scissors.
Show a preference for a dominant hand.

Understanding the World

Past & Present

Birth to 3

Explore and respond to different natural phenomena in their setting and on trips.

The Natural World

3-4 years

Use all their senses in hands-on exploration of natural materials
Begin to understand the need to respect and care for the natural environment and all living things.

Reception

Explore the natural world around them.

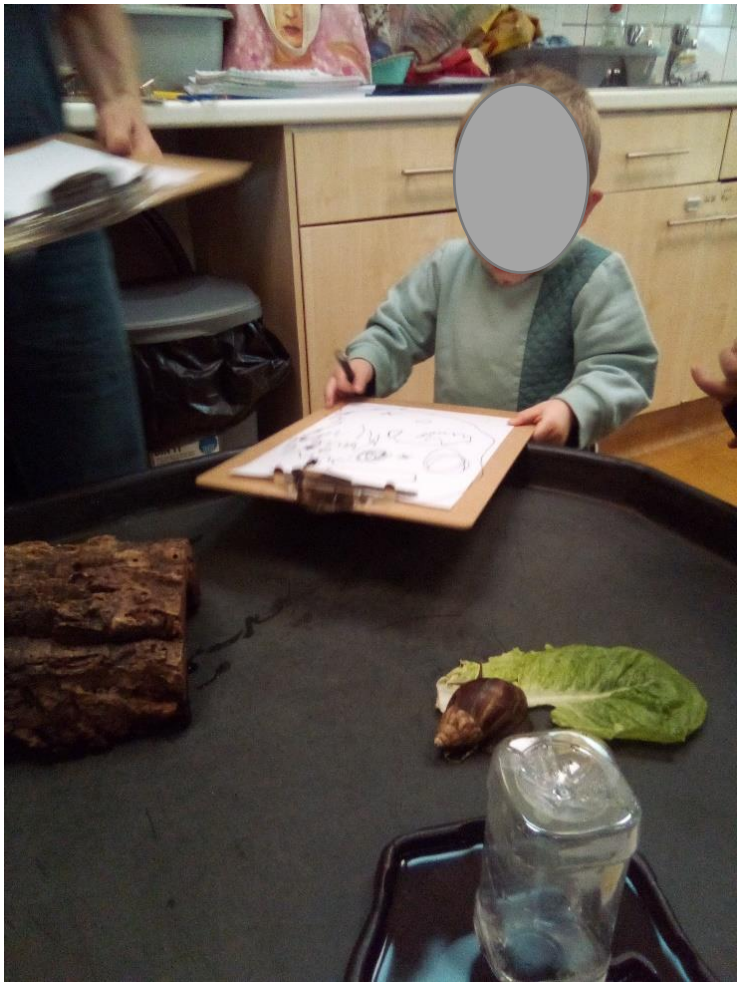
While exploring the snail Emaan said: **“Daddy snail look. I’m touching daddy snail. Look I’m stroking him.”** And she stroked the snail very gentle.

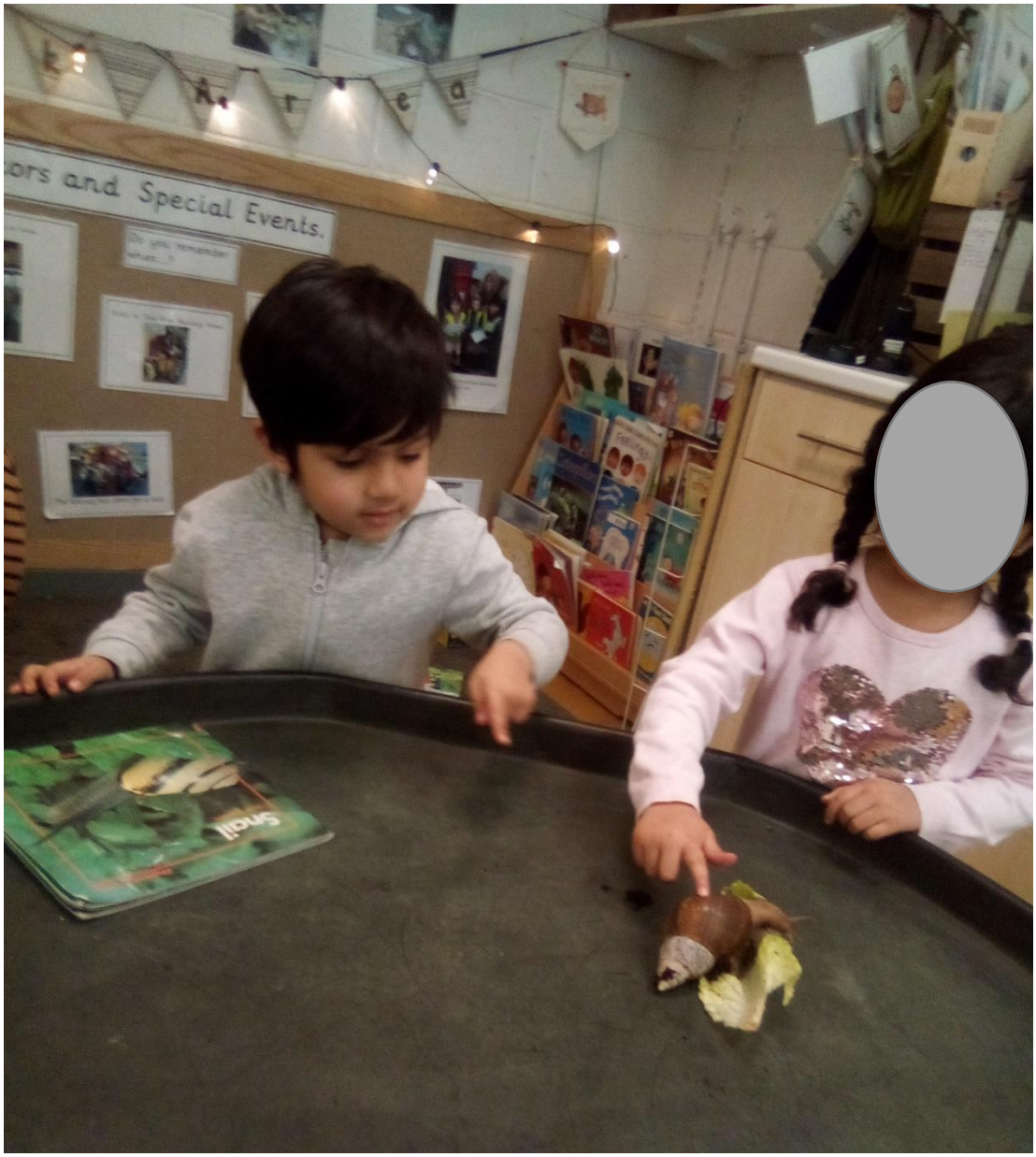
Zakariya looked closely at the snail and said: **“He is shy. He’s sleeping. Eating lettuce”.**

Alayna looked at the snail, stroked it gently and said: **'Bring lettuce!'**

While looking at the snails Raeesah said: **"They are boy and a girl. The snail lives in ZOO".** She drew snails.

Bob and Robbie looked at our snails and drew it on a piece of paper using a felt pen.





Aahil and Hidayh - Dua looked closely at the snail, stroked and lifted it gently.

Musa looked at the snails, stroked them gently and stacked slices of cucumber on the top of each other creating a tower.

Rachel our Artist spent time drawing the snails with the children. Here are a few of their wonderful drawings.

Raeesha

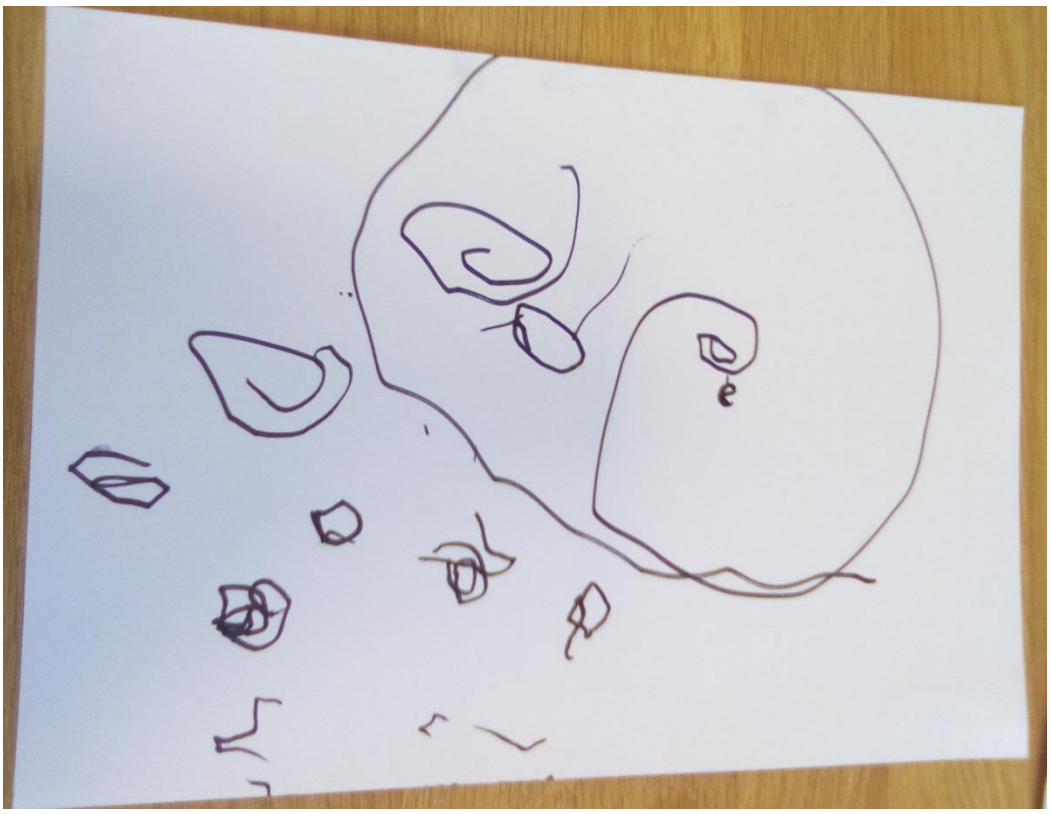
Raeesha spent time drawing the snails and said" **they're 7 and 8 years old**",

Chantelle

Whist drawing the picture of her snail Jannat said "I like lettuce, Mummy likes lettuce, Bobby likes lettuce and baby likes lettuce".

Saif

Ziyaan



We had a special visitor Cassie, who came to the nursery to talk about the snails.

She brought one of the snails from her house for the children to look at. She told the children that her snail was called Sheldon because he/she had a shell on his/her back.

The children all looked at the snail. Cassie showed the children the snails 2 tentacles with eyes on the end. It also has two smaller tentacles which she said the snail used for smelling their food.

We found out that snails are **hermaphrodites**, which means they are both male and female.

We also found out that snails have lots of tiny teeth in their mouths so they can scrape up their food.

The children noticed that the snail had a brown shell with lots of stripes.

Cassie told us that the snail had a big muscle that helped it to move called a foot.

Ayra said "hello" to the snail.

Minahil noticed that the shell was pointy.

We talked about the shell being a spiral.

Cassie brought lots of resources so the children could make a new habitat for her snail.

First, she put a box on the floor.

Next the children filled the box with special soil called substrate.

Hidayah -Dua said **"we need soil"** and Minahil put the substrate in the box.

Hawwaa then added a plant pot, so the snail had somewhere to hide and shelter.

Aahil put a piece of cuttle fish in the habitat and Musa put in a bowl of water.

Then the children put in some food. Cassie showed the children some of the snail's favourite foods, this included sweet peppers, sweet potatoes and courgette.

Finally, Cassie put the snail in the box, he / she started to move around and they ate some sweet pepper.

Cassie said she had been carrying out some research and had found out that snails liked moss so they can make cosy beds. We added some in our habitat box.

After Cassie had finished talking to the children, they spent some more time observing the snails in the tray and used some water and a brush to give them a wash.

Whist washing the snails Minahil said **"the dirt is on his foot".**

Musa looked at the snail and said **“lets rinse the snail”** as he used the brush to wash the snail with water.

Musa stacked up all the snail’s favourite food. Then it started to nibble the sweet potato.