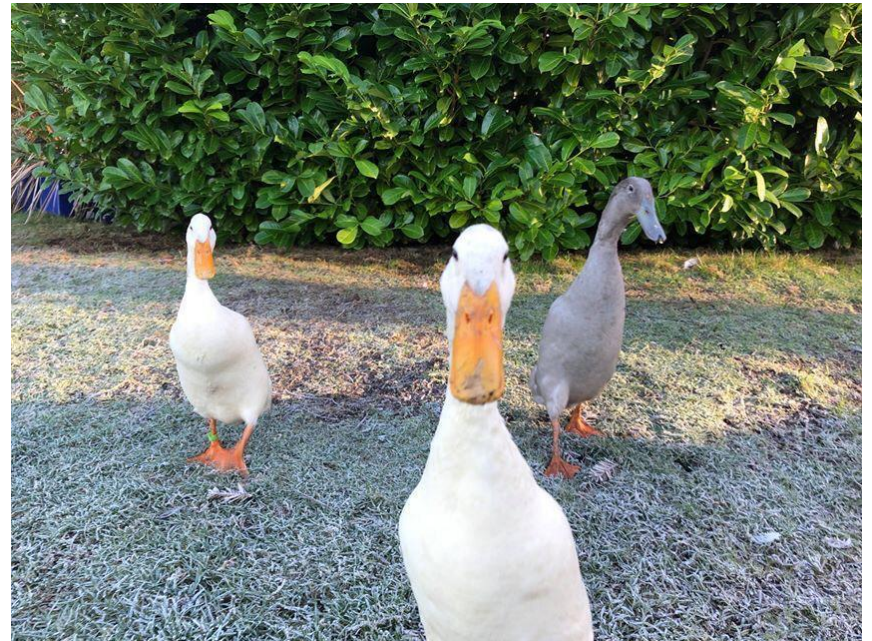


# Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April:

Most of you will remember meeting our 3 little ducklings who were born last June when they came to visit in school! They have grown up into 3 gorgeous boy ducks! Did you know that boy ducks have a curly tail feather! And only girl ducks make the proper quack noise! Boy ducks make a funny Donald Duck sounding noise!

From left to right: Donald, Davie and Bubbles.

They would really really really like some girlfriends!! So while we are all at home enjoying time on lockdown, we decided to hatch some more. We have plenty space to keep all our ducklings, whether boys or girls.



6 Indian  
Runner Duck Eggs  
arrived by Royal Mail  
thank you to  
Postman Cherry!



These had to sit and rest for 24 hours. We used this time to get the incubator set up and running at all the right temperatures and humidity. It's very important to keep the conditions perfect.

We will post updates and photos as we go along so that you can see what we are doing. It will take around 28 days for them to hatch and please don't be sad if they don't all make it 😞 We will do our very best to make all the conditions just perfect but we don't expect to have 6 ducklings at the end 😊.

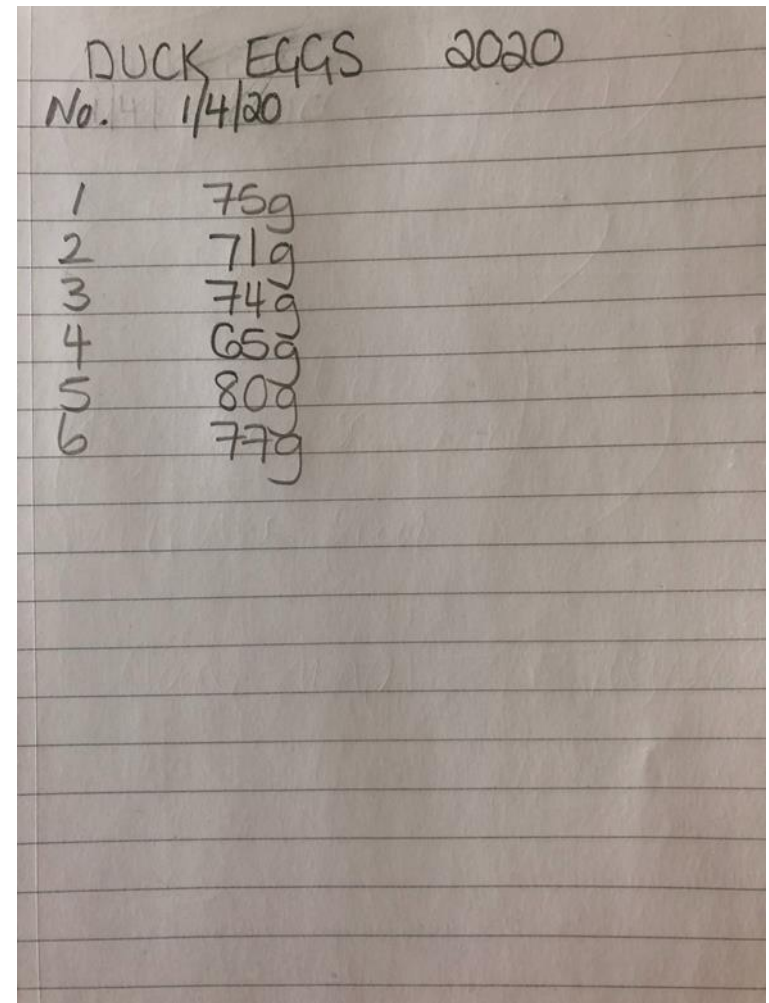
## Friday 2nd April:

Our incubator has been running at its correct temperature for 24 hours and we have stabilised the humidity to the correct levels. We can control the humidity by adding or removing water in the incubator.

Then temperature required for hatching ducklings is 37.6c. with a humidity between 40/50%

We will need to monitor the progress of the eggs on a regular basis and there are 2 good ways for us to keep a check on them.

Firstly, we weigh them before we start and plot the weights. We will check the weight at regular intervals. Each egg is a different weight. We are looking for the eggs to go down in weight by just over 10%.



DUCK EGGS 2020  
No. 4 1/4/20

1	75g
2	71g
3	74g
4	65g
5	80g
6	77g

We have given each egg a number and have hand written it in pencil on the egg. This way we can keep a check on the development regularly as we go through the hatching process.

Secondly we have had a peek inside the egg to see what it is looking like!! Obviously we cannot see through the egg shell so we do this by shining a bright light into the egg. This is called candling!!



When we next candle them in a few days time we should see something very interesting! Fingers crossed!

We are now ready to put them in the incubator!!

You can see them all spaced out with their numbers and an X on them. On the other side of the eggs they have their same number and a O on it.

The incubator will turn the eggs around at regular time intervals.... we use the O and X to make sure that the eggs have turned. This is mimicking what mummy duck would be doing if she was sitting on these eggs in a nest.

We have encountered our first problem though!! No 6 egg is so big it won't turn in the incubator 😞. So for now we are turning it manually when we remember!!



# Duck story #3

End of week 1.

We hope everyone has had a good break and enjoyed the lovely weather we have had.

If you remember we candled our eggs to see what they looked like before we put them in the incubator:





After 5 days in the incubator we decided to have another look and this is what we could see:



You can see that the duckling is starting to form: Red circle in the middle with all the blood veins starting to show too. We found this in all eggs except number 1 which sadly didn't look to be changing. It remained in the incubator to see if any changes would happen.

On day 7 we decided to have another look and plot the weights again to see. You will see a huge difference in the eggs!!



Lots of blood veins and the baby duckling getting bigger. This is in all 5 eggs, sadly number 1 still remains the same as day 1 and we have come to the conclusion that this egg was not fertile and it has been removed from the incubator. It's important to remember that it is still very normal for the eggs to stop growing and not hatch but so far so good. Keeping everything crossed!!

Can you see the very bright part of the egg on the right-hand side? This is the air sac, and we want to see this getting bigger as we go through the process. The duckling will need this air supply while it tries to hatch.

DUCK EGGS 2020  
1/4/20 8/4/20

1	75g	72g
2	71g	67g
3	74g	74g
4	65g	63g
5	80g	77g
6*	77g	74g

No 5. Not turning

We checked the weights again and can see that all eggs are reducing in weight which we would expect. Keeping an eye on number 3, we think first weight has been wrong!  
Some eggs had not been turning properly so we have been manually doing this.

# Duck story #4

Day 11 and we are starting to see movement. Click on the link below!

<https://youtu.be/LWD1PSg7-VY>

# Duck story #5

A video taken on day 17. As the eggs begin to fill with growing duckies, it is hard to take pictures. The remaining 5 eggs are all developing nicely.

<https://youtu.be/Ndd22xrUFII>

In this video you can see the head, the beak moving, and its long runner duck neck and flappy feet if you look carefully. You can also see the air sac is getting bigger!

Fingers crossed 11 days to go and we will hopefully see some ducklings.

We'll update you all next week sometimes. Keep your fingers crossed for little ducklings x

If anyone has any questions then please just send us a message via school or directly 😊

Euan, Andrew and Lewis

# Duck story #5

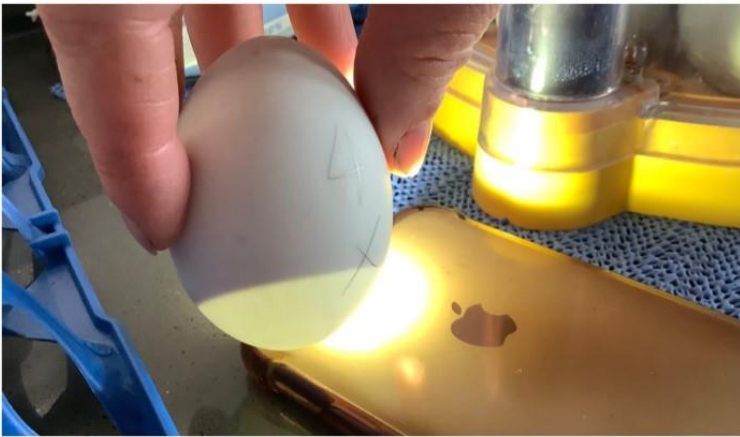
There has not been much to see over the last week.

4 of the eggs are now full and showing dark so we have to hope that they are full of duckling! No.5 doesn't seem to be as full as others so we wonder if that one has sadly stopped growing, this is the very big one which wasn't turning properly.

We have seen a few of the eggs rocking away so moving away but not heard any cheeps.

Now it's time to keep everything crossed for some fluffy babies later this week.

We have had a last peek inside the eggs and can see that all have large air sacs which is great news for hatching



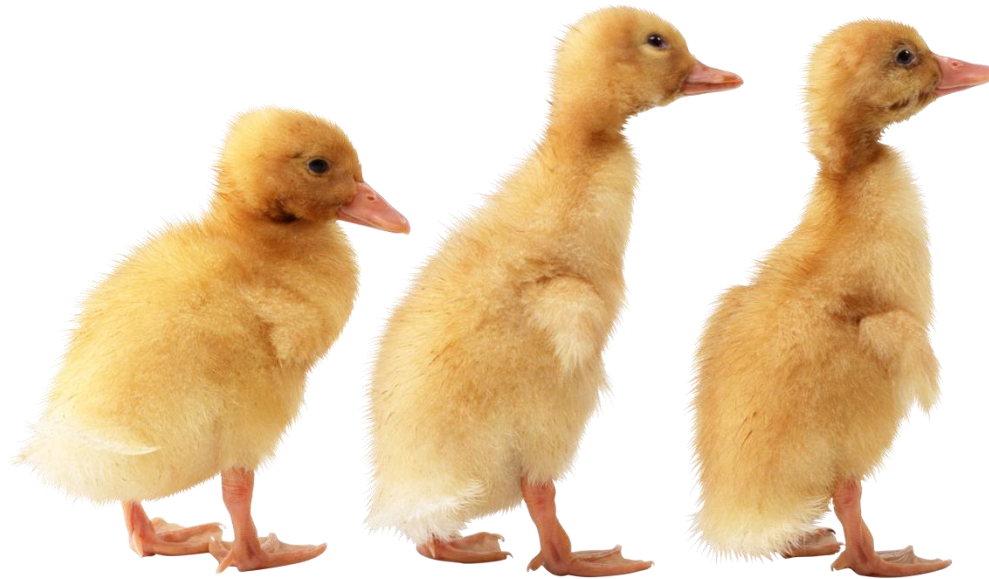
There is no sign of any beaks poking through into the air sacs yet so we are a few days away from any hatching.

We have added lots of water to get the humidity nice and high. No more peeking at eggs. Duck egg shells are much thicker than hen egg shells so the ducklings will need help to soften them and break through them. The higher humidity will help and we will also start to spray the eggs with water.

We are looking out for the tell tale 'pip' which looks like a tiny hole. Then we will know that hatching is starting.

We will try our very very hardest to catch this on film, Lewis, Euan and Andrew are going to camp out in the kitchen to try catch it!

The wait starts now!! Keep everything crossed for us x





# Duck story – Hatching time!!

Last week of incubation was very nail biting. The ducklings fill so much of the shell you can't see any movement and do not know if they are still alive or not.

No.2 started to give us worries as it wasn't as full looking and so we knew the wee duck hadn't grown as much 😞. There was also lots of blood showing which again wasn't a great sign and we thought it might now be a dud egg.

Due date came and went with no signs. Then a day later on Thursday our no.2 'dud' egg pipped it's beak into the air sac inside and we could see it moving away inside . Still lots of blood showing and we waited to see what would happen. It can take more than 48 hours for them to hatch fully. None of the others had any signs of life hatching yet.

Friday came and went with no changes to any of the eggs.

By Saturday we became worried that the dud egg maybe wasn't going to make it as it hadn't progressed any further which made us very sad and we began to worry as the egg shell began to turn black. Our concern was the duck running out of air inside. We did lots of research and made the decision that we would try make a pin prick air hole for it.

The biggest problem when hatching is that as soon as you open the incubator the humidity drops.... if any of the eggs have started to hatch, the opening of the incubator will cause the inside membrane of the egg to shrink and it can suffocate the ducks/chicks inside. This is known as shrink wrapping. As none of the other eggs had pipped yet we quickly pulled no.2 out and made a little hole near where it's beak was and popped it back in. It repositioned itself in the shell and moved it's beak right where the hole was. Hurrah!

Later that day all the other eggs pipped and started the hatching. Within a couple of hours we had our first little duckling No.4!! I have added some time lapse videos onto you tube for you to see!



The little duckling needs to stay in the incubator to fluff up and they can stay in there easily without food for 24/48 hours. But it is super cramped!! We also had the problem that it was kicking around all the other hatching eggs and those that had made holes were turned upside down. This is all very normal but it's so very hard not to want to interfere at this stage.

When we hatched last year we also had all the eggs pipped with holes in them and could see the little beaks. But the hatched ducklings pooing onto hatching eggs and their opened shells began to cause bacteria with the heat we believe. We followed all the rules and didn't interfere and sadly lost those ducklings. We didn't want the same to happen again this time.

By Saturday night we still just had 1 duckling and very little progress on any of the other eggs. We made the decision that if no more hatched by morning we would have to remove the 1 duck and run the risk of humidity dropping.

Thankfully through the night no.6 hatched! So we had 2.... some pressure was lifted as we would not be in the position of having a lonely duckling.

Our no2 'dud' egg was still hanging in there and had started to make a little hole all by itself so was still a possibility. Sadly no.5 which had had the bigger hole was starting to look not too clever and the hole that had been made was turning black and we started to see signs that we saw last time about possible bacteria problems.

We did more research and decided that we were going to have to intervene, we couldn't risk the same result as last time, knowing that by doing so we may make the wrong decision and lose the remains 3 ducklings. We pulled out the 2 hatched ones and their smelly shells and sprayed some water in to raise humidity. Then waited to see what happened next.

Then the fun fluffy cuddles of ducklings began. Honey and Arlo.



After a few hours we reviewed the eggs and while the hole on no.5 was a bit bigger it was apparent that the fluffy feathers we could see sticking out were drying out and so was the membrane under the shell... we had likely caused the start of the shrink wrapping by removing the other 2 ducks. The egg was shaking vigorously and it was trying so very hard to hatch but was stuck fast. We had read that the use of sterile water or coconut oil can ease the drying out process, But again opening the incubator causes the drying out so it's a risk.

We got the bathroom all hot and full of steam by running the shower and quickly whipped out the egg and began operation manual hatch!

We used a cotton bud to apply coconut oil around the membrane to soften it. We also slowly picked away at some of the shell being very very careful not to disturb the membrane underneath. Then popped back in the incubator..... whilst opened we rubbed some coconut oil on No2 and No3 for good luck.

It took a couple of attempts in the shower with No5 and then we had our 3rd duckling! Followed shortly after by No3 which zipped straight into action as soon as the coconut oil hit it!!

4 little ducklings and only No2 left to go. Chances were not high as it had been trying to hatch for over 4 days..... it kept making progress but it was apparent by seeing through the hole that it was much smaller than the others. We again made the decision to take it into the shower room and within minutes it was also hatched.









Unbelievably we managed to hatch all 5 ducklings!!

No2 - Dudley

No3 - Pingu

No4 - Honey

No5 - Corona 'Rona'

No6- Arlo

You tube links:

<https://youtu.be/ZeqRa-fvgVM>

<https://youtu.be/d-aIFKoNgio>

<https://youtu.be/F5zs7S6rmYo>

Our little dud egg became Dudley, she/he is significantly smaller than the other ducklings but all are eating and drinking well and bringing lots of joy to us all.

I vowed never again..... but .....

Meet Ebony, our first ever broody hen. She is going crazy growling and attacking us for babies to hatch so we have stuck some more duck eggs under her and we will watch this space!!!



We hope you have enjoyed hearing our journey, if anyone has questions please just get in touch.

Thank you from Lewis, Euan and Andrew (and Cat!)