



ACE Nursery School & ACE Day Nursery

NEWSLETTER



December 2023



It's the end of an action-packed autumn term and we'd like to thank you all for the wonderful support you've given ACE. Lots of parents have been in to talk to us about celebrations that are important to their family, play an instrument, read, sing, or help us with co-op hours. A new ACE Parents' Committee has been voted in and the winter fayre was a great success with 35 parents coming together to help out on the day. We've summarised some of the highlights of the last two months below, together with dates for your diaries. We wish you all happy holidays! Thank you for all your lovely messages, cards and gifts. We hope you have a relaxing break and look forward to seeing you again in January.

Nursery School news

STEM activities have been a focus this term as they are always great learning opportunities and we'd like to share a few specific items in this edition.



Tie-Dye fun

We were delighted when Lucy and Lucy (James and Harry's mummies) offered to come in to do some tie dye activities with the children. Each child was given a white T shirt which they sprayed with water. Then the dampened T shirt was rolled up and the boys and girls fixed different sizes of elastic bands around it before dripping coloured dye over it. Lucy took all the T shirts home, washed them and brought them back. There was one for every child and many excited faces when the children tried on their T shirts. It was as if a new ACE uniform had been created; all the children looked similar in their works of art. Some children are still wearing the T shirts to ACE regularly. Enormous thanks to Lucy x 2 for organising this wonderful opportunity.

Dissolving experiment

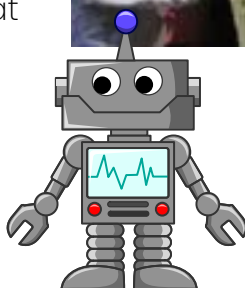
Bethany set up a candy cane experiment with the girls and boys last week. The children helped her place a small sugar candy cane in different liquids (warm water, cold water, oil and vinegar) and we observed the reactions. Some dissolved quickly, others more slowly and some not at all. We discussed what is happening to the sugar molecules in the different liquids, made predictions, learnt some new vocabulary and worked out that temperature can make quite a difference (warm water dissolving the sugar more quickly than cold).



Building robots

We're very grateful to Tabitha, Otis's mummy, for coming in to talk to us about robots. In preparation for her visit we offered our 'bee bot' to the children. They programmed our table top robot with directional instructions: forwards, backwards, left and right. We attached pens to the bee bot and saw the patterns it produced as it followed the programmed route. We also talked about what a robot might look like and do.

Tabitha gave us an inspiring talk and then read us, 'Little Miss Inventor and the Robots.' The girls and boys became robots and walked around the classroom using authentic robotic voices. After that the children had the chance to design and make their own robots using recycled materials together with some googly eyes Tabitha had brought with her. Thank you, Tabitha, for a wonderful morning!



Developing life skills

We are always keen to teach the children various life skills and now they are well settled, they are getting involved in a wide range of activities outside the classrooms e.g. doing the washing up, wrapping presents, cleaning tables and cutting fruit. They also help set up the garden and complete outdoor safety checks each morning with a teacher. If there is a skill you'd like us to practice at ACE, please let us know.

Hanukkah

Ben, Shaya's daddy, is a rabbi and came in to tell us about Hanukkah. He brought a menorah and explained about the candles: four each side to represent the eight nights of Hanukkah, with a ninth in the middle which is a helping candle used to light the others. Each night one more candle is lit than the previous night until on the final night all eight candles are ignited. Ben also told us that doughnuts and chocolate coins are enjoyed during Hanukkah as a treat.



St Nicholas



Thank you to Ariana, Luca's mummy, who talked to us about St Nicholas. Her family has been gathering for over 40 years to celebrate 6th December each year with their Dutch friends and cousins. They meet up for an evening of music making. They each sing Christmas carols, play percussion and various other instruments; the older children usually put on a play too. Then they clean their shoes and put them by the fire with a carrot for the horse and a drink for St Nick. The children write a letter to him, and in the morning - if everyone has behaved that year - they may find presents in their shoe/boot (or occasionally a piece of coal if there was something St Nick was unhappy about). And he usually leaves a letter for everyone too; Ariana's family has these letters spanning back four decades!

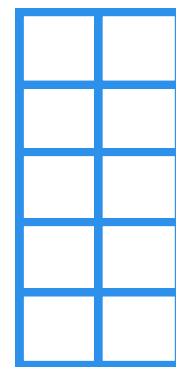
Letter from the King

At the time of the King's coronation the children made a postbox topper for the pillar box outside ACE and sent a picture of it to Buckingham Palace to wish him a happy coronation day from the ACE girls and boys. We were thrilled to receive a response recently...



Numeracy

We've had a numeracy focus on big space maths and ten frames this half-term. The children particularly enjoyed the large ten frame we marked on the Big Room floor with masking tape. We used loose parts with it regularly but one highlight was at singing time when the frame came in handy for songs like "5 current buns in a baker's shop". The children would put themselves in the squares and see how many were left each time someone was removed, reinforcing 1-10. Individual ten frames on a piece of paper or fabric can be transported around easily; we've even received a photo from one ACE family who drew a ten frame in the sand on a beach and used pebbles/shells.



Storytelling

Helicopter stories have also been extremely popular. A teacher sits with a child who tells them a story that has to fit on one page of a book. The adult writes down exactly what the child says. Then at group time we make a stage out of masking tape on the big room carpet, the children sit around it and the teacher reads out the story using the children around the stage as characters. E.g. Once upon a time there was a tree... and Jack gets chosen as the tree etc. It really brings the story to life and the children love being involved. It is a great learning opportunity as the boys and girls use their imagination, practice their story telling skills, develop their language and also grow in confidence.

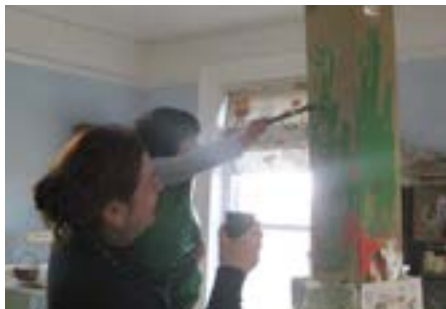
Language

We are focusing on a different letter sound each week eg. P at the moment. Pictures and objects to support the letter eg. parrot (toy one!), pineapple, pasta, paintbrush are put on display. Sound buttons are also made available with the children recording themselves saying a letter repeatedly P, P, P, P ... and they hear the sound being articulated when they press the button.



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...

ACE festivities started with the construction of a seed advent calendar. The children made 24 envelopes, decorated them and added numbers 1-24. Then we put a different packet of seeds inside each envelope; there was a selection of herbs, vegetables and flowers. These were all randomly stuck on a large piece of card and every day a different child has found the relevant number and opened an envelope. We plan to plant the seeds in the ACE allotment in the back garden next year.



Next we located our boxes of Christmas decorations and the children helped us to hang them up around the nursery. It has become an ACE tradition that we make our own Christmas trees. This year we have made not one but two trees at the Nursery School out of recycled materials. The children had great fun stacking the boxes, taping them together, painting them and then adding decorations. There's lots of teamwork involved and we have to be creative to reach the top of the tree to paint it or add finishing touches. The first tree was taken to Narnia (!) the display at the Zion Baptist Church on East Road as part of the Mill Road Winter Fayre.

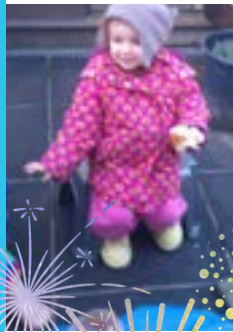
Lots of ACE families went to visit and some of you sent in photos of children in front of the ACE tree (thank you!) We were very proud to be the only homemade tree in the forest! The second tree has pride of place in the art room, complete with lights. The Little Room has been transformed into a home-from-home cosy living room with fairy lights, decorations, a pretend fire in the hearth, rug, sofa, oven and a dining table. The children made small holes in dark blue paper which we've stuck on the window so it looks like stars when there is daylight outside. The table has been set with ornate tableware on some occasions and a wooden sushi set at others, complete with chopsticks. The room has been used for a range of activities, including practising wrapping skills in there (Christmas paper with cardboard boxes) as well as Santa's grotto during the Winter Fayre. Last week a group of children went to deliver Christmas cards to the residents at Jimmy's and then went on to buy some kitchen supplies from the charity shops on Burleigh Street. The boys and girls chose items like an avocado press, coffee pot and spoons to add to the table. It's a lovely tranquil room that the teachers take small groups into for activities.



Day Nursery news

Bonfire Night

Sarah H led our bonfire night celebrations in early November. With the children's help we made a pretend fire in the garden using wooden building blocks, sticks, red fabric and tissue paper, colourful scarves and newspaper. We played around the 'fire' for most of the day! We also created firework pictures in the garden on a wide sheet of white material that was attached to the fence. Some of the children splashed paints onto the fabric, whilst others stamped onto the material with stubbies. We ate our tea around the 'fire' which Sharon had prepared for us: (veggie) hot dogs and cupcakes. The celebrations ended with a real sparkler display, from a safe distance. It was a really fun and creative day.



Advent window

We were asked to participate in the Priory Road Living Advent Calendar (which we have been part of for the last few years) and were allocated number 6 (which is appropriate given our address is 6A!) The children cut out a range of shapes from festive fabric, practising their fine motor skills using scissors. These shapes were stuck onto three stockings we had painted and then all mounted on the kitchen window complete with snowflakes and a number 6.



Christmas Tree

As explained earlier on in the newsletter, we like to create our own tree out of recycled materials. We set to work with three large empty boxes and a lot of newspaper on the kitchen floor. We painted the cardboard with green paint, brushes and sponges. When the basic tree shape was dry, we attached decorations, tissue paper and finally lights. The children added Father Christmas, snowmen toys and figures. We decided to make a star to go on top and used glue spreaders to secure it in place. The staff think the finished product looks a bit like the Grinch!

We've finished off the term with a Christmas party and a celebration vegetarian lunch prepared by Sharon.



Other activities

We've had so many parents come in to share their interests with us recently. It really enhances what we can offer the children, so thank you for your time and expertise:

Lauren (Caius's mummy) who marked **Thanksgiving** at Little ACE.

Tomas (Bela's daddy) who played Christmas carols and nursery rhymes on his **violin**.

Rebecca (Esther's mummy) who ran a **singing** session for us.

Ellie (Nuri's mummy) who talked to the children about **Hanukkah**.

Elaine (Sophie's mummy) celebrated **St Martin's day** with us.

Mary-Ann (Constantijn's mummy) who has been in to read **stories** with the children.

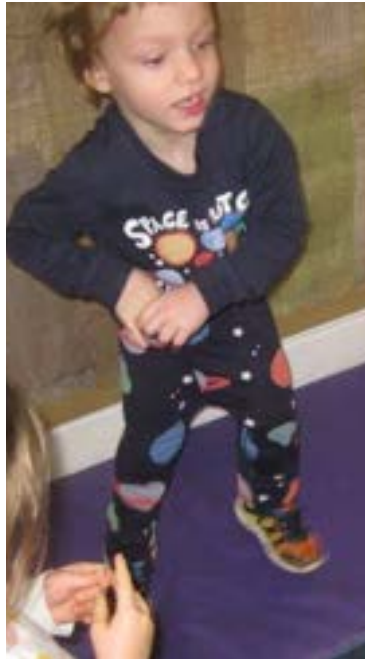
Daniela (Leo's mummy) and Dave (Oscar's daddy) for **playing** with the children.



Children in Need Fundraiser



At the Day Nursery the children made cakes (banana bread and shortbread) which we sold at pick up time. At the Nursery School, we held a pyjama jump-a-thon to raise funds for Children in Need. The girls and boys were invited to come to ACE all week dressed in their PJ's, with parents commenting how excited their children were to be able to wear their pyjamas all day! Every child was invited to take part in the challenge to see how many jumps they could complete in 30 seconds. The parents generously sponsored their children and ACE collectively raised an amazing £468. The staff joined in the fun and wore their pyjamas on the last day of the challenge, and how comfortable and warm they were! Sleep time went very smoothly all week as the children were already in their night clothes!





Winter Fayre

The rain stopped in the morning and we were able to enjoy all our outdoor activities as planned, culminating in carol singing in the garden. Thanks to the 35+ parents who made this event happen, together with a number of staff members. We'd particularly like to thank Mircea (Felix's daddy) who was the lead organiser and Julia (Rebecca's mummy) who led the clean up team. Thanks also to Jenni (Grady's mummy) who answered the last minute SOS call for a second Santa and volunteered her work colleague! Thank you to everyone who came along on the day, prepared materials in advance, baked cakes or donated tombola prizes. There are some wonderful photos, which were mostly taken by Michael (Grady's daddy) and Lauren (Caius's mummy).











Staff news



We wish Maria (at the Nursery School) well as she starts her maternity leave this week; her baby is due at the end of January. At the Day Nursery, we'd like to welcome back Sarah P from her maternity leave and Natalie who re-joined after a year working in adult mental health services. At the Nursery School we are delighted to be joined by Lily who is an early years practitioner working three days per week and Molly, a classroom support worker who is with us four days per week. You can see Molly is settling in well in this picture, with the children already thoroughly enjoying spending time with her.



Get to know the team: Carmen, ACE Day Nursery

"My name is Carmen and I am originally from a small village in Extremadura, Spain. I studied a bachelor's degree in Primary Education, specialising in Special Needs, at the University of Extremadura and worked for six years in childcare in Spain. In 2016, I decided to come to the UK with my partner Antonio. I spent one year in Cambridge and after that we moved to Scotland, where we had four wonderful years. There, I got my first job in childcare in the UK. In 2021, we returned to Cambridge and I started working at ACE, where I continue to enjoy my passion for childcare."

I like to relax at home watching documentaries and films with my partner. I also like travelling and visiting historical places and cities. I enjoy trying new restaurants and food from different countries. In my free time, I enjoy walking around the city and exploring new places, spending time with my friends and reading."



Staff night out

A lovely celebration meal took place at Little Petra to mark 50 years of ACE service (Gemma: 20 years, Sarah R: 15 years, Diana: 10 years and Bethany: 5 years). Thank you to a group of parents who kindly contributed towards the cost of the night out. A wonderful time was had by all.



Co-Op Hours

ACE was founded as a parents' co-operative 57 years ago and the input of parents in the running of the nurseries is a huge part of the ACE ethos. We're enormously grateful to all of you who have helped out over this half-term as well as enhancing the experiences we are able to offer the children.

Winter Fayre helpers

From Little ACE: Leo and Lauren (Caius); Theresia (Leopold); Anca (Senan); Ying (Galen); Rebecca and Petar (Esther); Sasha and Thomas (Max); Tomas (Bela); Jon (James). **From Big ACE:** Will (Theo); Ariana and Johann (Luca); Andreia (Maria); Bonnie (Emmerich); Bethany (Eusebio); Mircea and Adriana (Felix); Mayu (Sara); Rohanne (Clementine); Oliver (Max); Harriet and Charlie (Florence); Leo and Ellie (Rowan); Charlotte (Thomas); Jon (Clara); Bell (Tin Lam); Klaske (Julius); Mamoru and Miyuki (Mako); Rebecca (Hazel); Michael and Jenni (Grady); Julia (Rebecca)



Little ACE Hours

Visiting nursery to help us celebrate events, read or play music:

Lauren (Caius) for Thanksgiving; Elaine (Sophie) for St Martin's Day; Mary-Ann (Constantijn) reading stories to the children; Rebecca (Esther) singing; Dave (Oscar) playing with the children; Tomas (Bela) playing violin; Ellie (Nuri) Hanukkah; Daniela (Leo) came into play with the children. **Laundry:** Elaine and Alex (Sophie); Victoria and Michael (Flora); Sophie and Giles (Marina); Sarah-Jane and Dave (Oscar). **Poster design:** Yashi (Arna).

Maintenance: Bob (Lila) painting; Rebecca and Peter (Esther) weeding front garden; Tal and Tali (Yulie) mending dolls house and letter box; Kevin and Daniela (Leo) attaching bolts to a storage unit.

Wrapping gifts: Eleni (Dani)



Big ACE Hours

Visiting nursery to help us celebrate events or share their interests/skills with us:

Ben (Shaya) Hanukkah; Ariana (Luca) St Nicholas; Orla (Connor) who taught us some Christmas carols using Makaton signing; Mamoru (Mako) Japanese characters; Lucy and Lucy (James and Harry) tie dye; Jon (Clara) making Christingles with the children; Tabitha (Otis) robots. **Wrapping gifts:** Daniela (Arthur) and Sophie (Esme). **Laundry:** Nisrin (Daniyal); Zeynep (Naz); Jon and Hanna (Clara's parents); Julius (Klaske); Mamoru (Mako); Samin (Yunus).

Shopping: Patricia (Ethan); Andreia (Maria); Zeynep (Naz). **Shredding:** Jocasta (Rio).

Mending books: Samin (Yunus). **Gardening:** Hero (Tilda) – adding colour to the front garden. **Maintenance:** Bleddyn (Leyna) Big room air vent replaced. Friso (Julius) repaired the floor of the playhouse. Atira (Shaya) for cutting up fabric into smaller pieces so it's easier for the children to use. Will (Theo) for helping with the AGM logistics. **Website:** Sargon (Yohan). **Newsletter:** Lucy (Harry)

Useful Information



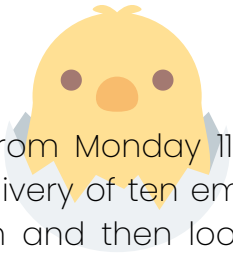
Primary School Applications

The deadline for primary school applications is **15 January 2024** (for any child who will be four years of age by 31st August 2024). Please see [here](#) for further details.

15
January

Living Eggs Project

This will run for two weeks from Monday 11th – Friday 22nd March. We will take delivery of ten embryo eggs, hopefully watch them hatch and then look after the chicks for the rest of the fortnight. The chicks will be based at the Nursery School but Day Nursery staff and children will visit them. Everyone who attends the spring fayre on Saturday 16th March will be able to see the chicks then as well.



Upcoming social events

International Breakfast: Saturday 10th February 2024, 10.00am– 12noon at ACE Day Nursery

Spring Fayre: Saturday 16th March, 2.00– 4.00pm at ACE Nursery School

Parents' social evening (pub location tbc): Wednesday 15th May from 7.30pm

Teddy Bears' Picnic: Saturday 22nd June, 2.00– 4.00pm at Wandlebury

Parents' social evening (pub location tbc): Wednesday 2nd October from 7.30pm

Pumpkin party: Saturday 19th October, 2– 4pm at ACE Nursery School

AGM: Monday 11th November, 7.30 for 8.00pm at ACE Day Nursery

Photos

Lorna from Moonbeams Photography will be taking individual photos of the Nursery School children on Tuesday 13th February from 9.15am and of the Day Nursery children on Wednesday 14th February from 9.45am.

A group picture of all the Nursery School children and staff will take place on Thursday 13th June at 10.00am. On the same day, the Day Nursery children and staff group photo will be taken at 11.15am.

Children who don't normally attend nursery on the days the photos are being taken are very welcome to pop in with a parent. We'd particularly encourage any families whose children don't usually attend on Thursday to come for the group photos as it would be lovely to have everyone in the picture. Please arrive by 9.45am at the Nursery School and 11.00am on 13th June to join in.

Photos will be available to buy afterwards.

DON'T FORGET

If you are having an extended break over the festive period, please let us know so that we can plan accordingly.

Parent questionnaires have been sent out at both nurseries; please complete and return them when you have a spare moment.



Term dates



Nursery School

Autumn Term 2023

Thursday 4th January: first day of term

Monday 19th – Friday 23rd February: half-term holiday (holiday playscheme available)

Wednesday 27th March: Last day of term

Monday 8th – Friday 12th April: holiday playscheme available

Summer Term 2024

Tuesday 16th April: first day of term

Monday 6th May: Early May day bank holiday

Monday 27th – Friday 31st May: half-term holiday. (Playscheme available from Tuesday 28th May – Friday 31st May inclusive)

Thursday 18th July: Last day of term

Friday 19th July: Closed

Monday 22nd July – Friday 16th August inclusive: holiday playscheme available

Monday 19th August – Tuesday 3rd September inclusive: summer closure period

Autumn Term 2024

Wednesday 4th September: first day of term

Day Nursery

Autumn Term 2023

Thursday 21st December: last day of term

Friday 22nd December – Monday 1st January inclusive: closed

Spring Term 2024

Tuesday 2nd January: first day of term

Thursday 28th March: last day of term

Friday 29th March – Friday 5th April inclusive: closed

Summer Term 2024

Monday 6th May: Early May day bank holiday

Monday 27th May: Spring bank holiday

Friday 16th August: last day of term

Monday 19th – Friday 30th August inclusive: closed

Autumn Term 2024

Monday 2nd September 2024: first day of term

The Committee



The new ACE parents' committee was voted in at the AGM on 10th November and met for the first time at the end of the month. The main focus was on welcoming new members, discussing regulatory paperwork, reviewing the finances, recruitment and planning for the winter fayre.

Caspar Rebling Chair

Salman Mohammad Treasurer

Rene Oosthuysen Secretary

Ariana Rees-Roberts Social events

Bego Carod Alonso (Day Nursery parent) Social events

Charlotte Eccles HR, staff liaison and newsletter

Jennifer Payne Safeguarding and child protection

Julia Forman Community liaison and policy review

Lauren Robarts (Day Nursery parent) Social events

Lisa Tuohy Headteacher

Lucy Richens Newsletter, social events and policy review

Mircea Iliescu Social events

Orla Lynskey Social events

Sarah Piotrowski/Hanna Ochalik-Baca ACE Day Nursery Manager

Will Newhouse Social events

The committee can be contacted independently of either nursery via this email address:
ace.parents.committee@gmail.com

There's also a separate email address for any safeguarding queries:
acesafeguarding@gmail.com. These email addresses divert to two different committee members and operate independently of the ACE staff teams.

