

ACE Nursery School & ACE Day Nursery Newsletter



We have had an action packed second half of the spring term. We've celebrated World Book Day, International Women's Day, Holi, Easter and more. Lots of parents have been in to share their interests with us, as well as helping with co-op tasks and supporting the Spring Fayre. Read on for news from both nurseries.

ACE Day Nursery News

Update from Sarah P

We wished **Sarah P**, Day Nursery Manager, a happy **maternity leave** in mid-February. We gave Sarah a few gifts including a back pack complete with portable changing mat and nappies, as well as an outfit for baby. A group of children from the Nursery School went to

visit Sarah on her last day accompanied by Lisa and Diana. A couple of weeks later we were delighted to hear that Sarah's son **Orson** had arrived safely. Mum and son are doing well, and plan to visit us soon (which we are very much looking forward to!)



Holi celebration

We celebrated **Holi** at Little ACE on 8th March. This Hindu festival of colours marks the coming of spring and the end of winter, but is

also known as the festival of love. Maria organised colourful painting activities to mark the occasion, including T shirt art.



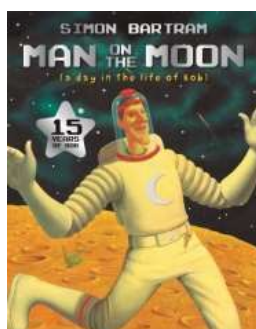
ACE Day Nursery News

Space theme

Carmen noticed that the children were interested in **space** and followed this up with activities involving the moon, stars and planets. She set up a range of play opportunities involving sensory activities with moon sand, as well as small world play.

Hanna picked up on this theme and introduced the children to the **Man on the moon** book which all the boys and girls enjoyed listening to. We often heard the children talking about Bob and aliens.

Natalie, a former Day Nursery staff member, popped in to say hello to us and was curious about the book, so she read it out to a group of children. This led to the children building a space rocket (as Bob flies to the moon in his space ship in the book). We recycled some boxes, then painted them with silver paint and stuck stars to it.



ACE Day Nursery News



Mother's Day

An incredibly well attended **Mother's Day tea** took place on Monday 20th March, attended by most Day Nursery mummies and some grandmothers. Sharon put on a feast of egg sandwiches, scones and more. We all had

such a good time we forgot to take any photos! Thank you for all the wonderful feedback; we have our thinking caps on about how to host a similar event for Father's Day in June.

STEM activities

We enjoyed a visit from Big ACE children and staff to undertake some joint **STEM** (Science Technology Engineering Maths) activities. See the Nursery School section below for further details. Inspired by these activities, we set up our own **rainbow science** experiment. Bably

and Carmen involved all the girls and boys in this activity. We put different food colouring on the tuff spot then added some baking soda followed by vinegar. The end result was amazing: all of the colours changed to a foam texture and expanded.



ACE Day Nursery News

Outings

We've been out and about. Each **trip** is a valuable learning experience with both the destination, as well as the journey to and fro, providing lots of opportunities for counting (e.g. car wheels) spotting numbers (e.g. on front doors) road safety (crossing roads and looking at road signs) learning the names of flowers and plants, enjoying a drink and a

snack in a new location, handling money and much more.

We visited the chicks at Big ACE (more about that below) and walked to the Central Library. We're regular visitors to the library and plan to visit every other month. We also enjoyed an outing to the local supermarket.

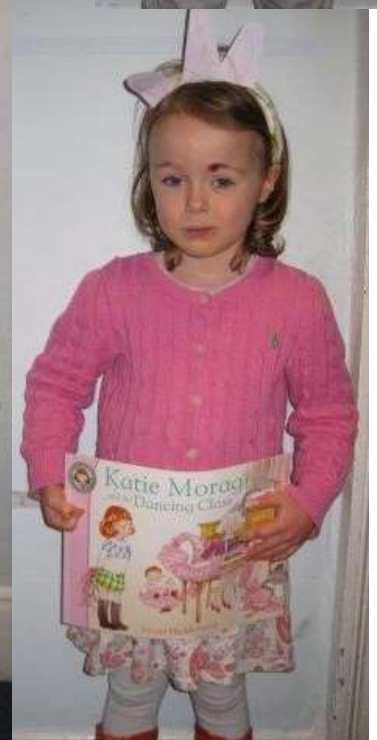
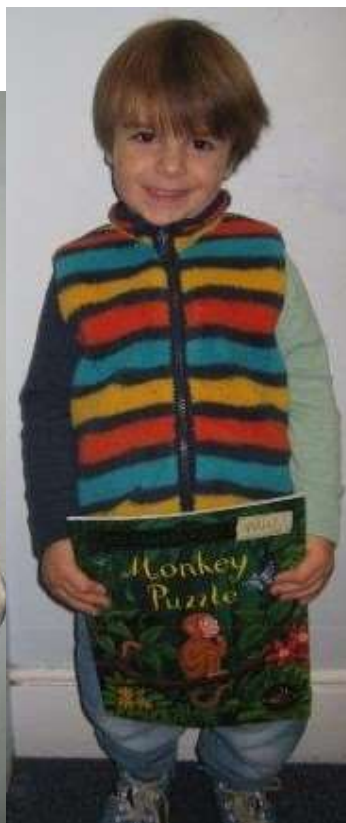
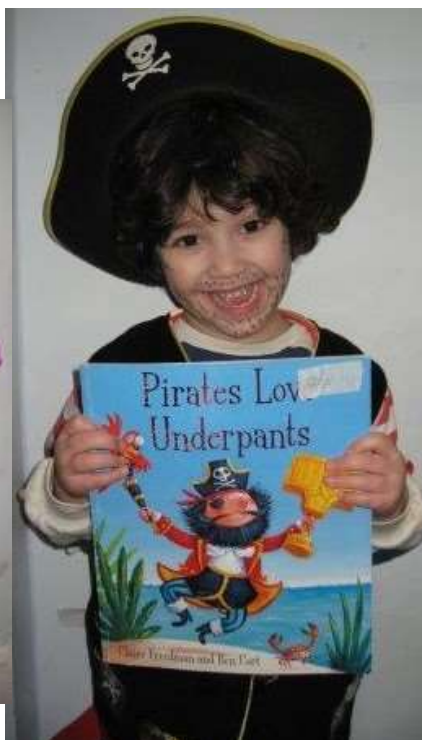


ACE Nursery School News

World Book Day

Thank you for going to so much effort on World Book Day; we very much enjoyed all

the books you sent in as well as the costumes the children arrived in.



ACE Nursery School News

The Chicks

Eight out of ten of the embryo eggs hatched and we enjoyed looking after the chicks for the rest of the fortnight. We learnt to stand with our hands behind our backs when looking at the chicks and most parents came in to see our fluffy visitors. We talked about life cycles, as well as learning vocabulary like pipping (the cracking of the egg shell in the

early stages of hatching) and dander (the feathers are covered in it when they hatch, giving them a wet appearance). The project provides valuable lessons in how to be quiet, kind, gentle and caring towards others in addition to inspiring art activities: some lovely paintings and clay models of chicks were made.



ACE Nursery School News



ACE Nursery School News

International Women's Day: 8th March 2023

We celebrated the day with a group of girls, staff and mothers running a lap of Parker's Piece, cheered on by a supportive group from the art room windows!



Visit to the Day Nursery for STEM activities

We enjoyed visiting our younger friends at the Day Nursery for some STEM activities. It was a "happy smells" session to tie in with British Science Week, the main theme of which was *connections*. Children were encouraged to smell a series of hidden items and guess what they were: they had a really good guess at items like lemongrass, mint, coffee beans, potato and jelly.



ACE Nursery School News

Connections theme – British Science Week

Bethany has been liaising with Julia on the Parents' Committee (Rebecca's mummy) to set up closer connections with local organisations. The first one we've linked up with is Jimmy's on East Road, a charity that provides both support and housing to homeless people. The children made Spring cards for the twenty residents and delivered them in person.



Parent visitors – Antarctica talk

We've been fortunate to have a whole host of interesting visitors in the last few weeks:

In tune with the connections theme for British Science Week, Andrew (Oscar R's daddy) came to talk to us about his work as a scientist, which sometimes takes him to the **Antarctic**. He told us about krill and the food chain that is important to sustain the larger animals which inhabit the Antarctic e.g. penguins, orcas and elephant seals. As well as showing us photos from his expeditions, Andrew brought in some warm weather

clothing and goggles for the children to try on. He suggested that the girls and boys huddle together like Penguins in the Antarctic and a couple of children subsequently reported that they felt warm in a closely packed group.

The session inspired one child to watch a David Attenborough programme about elephant seals whilst another brought in a photo of his toy orca to show friends at nursery.



ACE Nursery School News

Parent visitors continued – patterns theme

We had a patterns theme earlier on in this half-term (spotting patterns on animals and making our own) so we were delighted when two parents came in to share their crochet and patchwork hobbies with us. There were lots of patterns to discover in their handicrafts.

Thank you to Hanna (Clara's mummy) for sharing her patchwork quilts with us. The children enjoyed making their own patterns out of different fabrics cut into hexagonals. Thanks also to Alison (Oscar R's mummy) who brought in various crocheted objects she had crafted.



Parent visitor – music session

Thank you to Regev, Yotam's daddy, for leading a music session that involved both piano and flute. The children were fascinated by the sound of the flute up close.



ACE Nursery School News

Parent visitors continued – Easter talk

Jon, Clara's daddy, came in to talk to us about Easter. He told us that it is the biggest celebration of the year in church. Jon showed us the candle that is lit on Easter Sunday which the children were surprised to find was almost as tall as them. Jon also let us look at some of the gold themed decorations that are used at this time of year. Thank you, Jon!



Parent visitors continued – author/illustrator

Chloë, Oona's mummy, came in for an author/illustrator storytelling session. With her help, the children created their own character, Pinky Slinky. For the rest of the day the girls and boys were coming up with their own characters. Thank you for a fun session, Chloë.



Parent led outing to Makespace

Thank you to Andi, Max's daddy, for organising a trip to Makespace, a community workshop in town.

We saw a whole host of tools and machines including 3D printers and laser cutters. Andi engraved the letters 'ACE' onto a piece of wood using one of the laser cutters, and showed us a number of models that had been made with the printer. We've been invited back for a second trip next term!



ACE Nursery School News

Parent visit to make Challah

Atira, Shaya's mummy, came in to make Challah with the children. It is a special bread, usually braided, typically eaten on the Jewish Sabbath and festivals. It's a sweet bread containing vanilla. We enjoyed measuring out the ingredients, mixing them together, kneading the dough and then braiding it.

We had enough dough to make a second batch the following day with a different group of children. We were all offered a taste of the Challah when it was still warm – it literally melted in the mouth. Thank you, Atira.



Growing activities

With Spring in the air, we've started our growing activities. We made pots out of newspaper, filled them with compost and then planted various seeds. The tomatoes have already germinated. We're looking forward to getting going in the allotment during the playscheme next week and to using our new planters (which were pictured in the last newsletter).



ACE Day Nursery News

Spring Fayre

The Spring Fayre took place on Saturday 25th March and was a huge team effort, with about 40-parents coming together to make it happen. Huge thanks to everyone who attended or volunteered their time. The event was expertly run by Ariana, Luca O's mummy – thank you! Thanks also to Vicky, Iris's mummy, for leading the clean-up operation. Just under £100 was raised for the ACE Bursary Fund from the tombola, so thank you to everyone for supporting this particular initiative.

The face-painting team was incredible: packed full of professional artists, illustrators and make-up

artists; the results were fantastic as you can see in the photographs below. Thanks also to Dan, Gilbert's daddy, for being the best sport of the afternoon and dressing up as the Easter bunny. One family reported afterwards that their children were so inspired by meeting the bunny that they spent the rest of the day wearing a pair of leggings on their head, with the legs flopping down to look like rabbits' ears!.

Thanks to everyone who brought cakes and to Imogen, Otto's mummy, for the lovely photos.



Nursery Events



Staff News



This month we feature **Gemma**, Deputy Headteacher at the Nursery School, who has been at ACE for nearly 20 years and is about to go on maternity leave. We interviewed her as she embarks on an exciting new phase of her life.

When did you start at ACE?

I started working at ACE in September 2003 and this September will be 20 years.

Have you changed roles since you've been at ACE?

Yes, I have changed roles a couple of times. I began my time at ACE as a newly qualified Early Years Practitioner. After several years of gaining more experience, I then moved up to Third in Charge and more recently stepped up again to Deputy Headteacher.

What are the main changes have you seen at ACE over the years?

The amount of paperwork has definitely changed. I started at ACE when there was really very little in terms of paperwork. Then the Early Years Framework changed and suddenly we were drowning in paperwork, making the job twice as difficult and more importantly taking us away from the children. Finally

in 2021 the framework was changed again and it was emphasised that practitioners should not be spending large amounts of time away from the children. Finally, some sense from the government, although it's a shame it took such a long time!.

The other main change was during and after the pandemic. We had for many years worked in a certain way in terms of the routine and staff deployment. This then had to be adapted and it took some time to adjust to a different way of doing things but we have worked hard as team to make this work and have taken positives from the changes.

What particular memories stand out from your [19?] years at ACE (good and bad!)?

Gosh that's a question so many memories from my time at ACE. So, here's just a few...

I have taken children on trips many times over the years but one trip to Wimpole was particularly memorable. It was all going well and we started to walk back from the folly when the most awful thunderstorm was suddenly surrounding us. I just remember lots of crying, being completely drenched and relief when we made it back to the coaches.

Another memory is when some colleagues and I had taken a group of children to the Parkside School gym for the morning. We had such a great time, joining in with the children on the large mats and apparatus. We returned in a joyous mood; however, when the yellow door opened, we were greeted with those dreaded words "OFSTED is here!" These were the days when OFSTED just showed up without notice for an inspection. The joyous gym morning then became a distant memory, but we were pleased we had missed some of the OFSTED visit!

We have had some great visitors too: Professor Robert Winston came to film for the 'Child of our time' series and a parent came in with his Olympic gold medal for rowing, which we got to hold.

Finally, I have to say that the staff Christmas parties will always hold great memories. We held a couple in the basement of ACE and the karaoke was always a highlight (I think my other colleagues would agree my singing voice is excellent!)

Staff News

What have you most enjoyed about working at ACE? I think the fact that every day is different and you never know what each day will bring. Also, how much the children develop over their time with us. Every summer as children depart for school, looking at them and thinking they are ready to go gives you so much joy from the job you have done.

I also have to say I have most enjoyed working with fantastic colleagues. I started out newly qualified at ACE, so had so much to learn, but I can honestly say I learnt from the best.

Have you stayed in touch with former ACE colleagues who have left?

Yes, I have stayed in touch with quite a few former colleagues. For many years a former colleague and I went travelling to different countries when we had time off; she comes to visit me most years and I have been to see her in Berlin where she now lives. I have met up with other colleagues for coffee or lunch and we text each other from time to time to see how each other is getting on in life.

What are your top tips for looking after young children? You should be in a great position to look after your own child after all this experience at ACE!

I think patience is definitely a top tip - you need a lot of it and just take a deep breath and count to 10 if all else fails!

Are there any particular rhymes or stories you are looking forward to sharing with your baby?

I think my baby will be hearing so many rhymes as I have built up quite the back catalogue over the years. I love sharing books with children "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" is a favourite and has memories for me as it was the book I read to a group of children when I came for my interview at ACE.

Do you know if you are having a boy or a girl?

No I don't. It's been quite a journey to get here so a healthy baby is all I am hoping for.

How has your pregnancy been so far? Have you had any cravings?

The pregnancy has definitely had ups and downs so far but hopefully a smooth last few months. Not many cravings actually - just really in the early days of cheese and onion crisps.

When are you going on maternity leave? What are you most looking forward to during your maternity leave/about having a baby?

I go on maternity leave after the Easter holidays. I'm most looking forward to becoming a mum for the first time and I have to say I will not miss the commute into Cambridge every day.

Other staff news

We're delighted that **Diana** has agreed to step up to acting Deputy Headteacher at ACE Nursery School whilst Gemma is on maternity leave. We'd also like to welcome **Gabi** and **Touhida** at the Day Nursery as nursery assistants. Gabi is currently with us two days per week but will become full-time later in April when she has finished her degree. Touhida will be with us on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We're also looking forward to welcoming back Amy on a part time basis at the Day Nursery from April. Her maternity leave finished recently and she has been looking at different options but is now planning to return two days per week after the Easter break.

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. All families are asked to contribute practically via co-op hours every term or to pay in lieu @£17/hr if it isn't possible to help out. Many of you have been volunteering your skills in a variety of ways, but if you haven't managed to contribute yet this term, get in touch and we'll find you something to do!

Little ACE co-op hours

Thanks to all the other parents who have been helping out with their co-op tasks, including:

Spring Fayre: thank you everyone who helped out in advance, on the day or afterwards.

Donation: thank you to the family of Hal Perkins for donating the splendid train track pictured below.

Laundry: Thanks go to Sophie and Giles (Marina's parents), Tom and Lauren (Benji's parents) and Victoria and Michael (Flora's parents) for doing our washing this term.

Gardening: Thanks to Alice (Isla's mummy), Theresa and Sargon (Yohan's parents), Antoine and Victoria (Anouk's parents) and Katharine and David (Iona's parents)

Singing: Thanks to Lindsay (Tamar's mummy) for running some singing sessions with us.

Art work: Thank you Lindsay (Tamar's mummy), Sophie (Marina's mummy), Frank (Daphna's daddy) and Sarah-Jane (Oscar's mummy) for painting and varnishing the wooden circles.

Maintenance: Thank you to Ella (River's mummy) for fixing the spring on our yellow gate and to Lawrence and Em (Toby's parents) for repairing/painting our kitchen window.

Shredding: Thanks to Sasha (Max's mummy) for doing our shredding.

Shopping: Thank you Megan (Rowan's mummy) for helping us with the shopping as well as designing the poster for the Spring Fayre.



Big ACE co-op hours

Washing: Thank you to the washing team including Jessica (Oscar R's mummy), Bethany (Eusebio's mummy), Tabitha and Ed (Otis H's parents), Yashi and Matthew (Ethan's parents), Emily and Oliver (Max de G's parents), Ana (Luka W's mummy) and Helen and Berry (Emer's parents)

Spring Fayre: Thank you to all the parents who helped out before, during and afterwards. We couldn't do it without you!

Shopping: Thanks to Cise and Niyazi (Mirai's parents) to Lana (John's mummy) and to Andreia (Maria's mummy) for doing the ACE shopping. each week. Thanks also to the families who purchased and delivered compost to us for our growing activities: Thomas (Helen's daddy), Javeria and Sikander (Rayyan's parents), Ella's grandmother, and Jon (Clara's daddy).

Activities: Thank you to all the parents named above who have been in to share their hobbies and professions with us. It's inspiring for the children and really adds to the experience we are able to offer. all the boys and girls.

Repairs: Thanks to Jack and his father (Luka W's father and grandfather) for looking at the front door bell. Thank you Andi (Max M's daddy) for mending a unit for us.

Shredding: Thank you to Ella's grandmother for tackling our shredding mountain, together with Michaela (Jules's mummy).

Useful Info

- **Primary school places** will be announced on 17th April. If you would like to share your child's school destination with other ACE families leaving ACE this summer, please let us know. We put together a list of leavers, schools and parent contact details so you can organise play dates with children heading to the same school. It all helps with the transition process.
- **A group photo of the children and staff will be taken at both nurseries in the summer term**, by Lorna of Moonbeams Photography. This is taking place on **Thursday 8th June**. If your child is not normally at ACE on this day of the week, please come in and join the photo which is being taken at 10.00am at the Nursery School (please aim to arrive by 9.45am as it takes a while to get everyone into position) and at 11.00am at the Day Nursery (please arrive by 10.45am). Hard copies will be available to purchase afterwards.
- **Did you know** the rear garden wall at the Nursery School has been rebuilt, as part of the redecoration work that was undertaken in the autumn. The reclaimed bricks look stunning. Despite the building work now having been completed, we'll continue with the Puffin group being dropped off and collected at the ACE front door
- **Ten frames** are ideal for using on holiday. This photo was sent to us by an ACE family who made lots of use of a ten frame on the beach using pebbles, shells etc. A template ten frame is available on our [website](#)



ACE Parents' Committee News

ACE Committee 2022/23

Chair	Caspar Rebling
Treasurer	Liam Kelly
Secretary	Rene Oosthuysen
HR/staff liaison	Anna Masefield & Charlotte Eccles
Child protection/safeguarding lead	Miriam Haaser
Newsletters	Charlotte Eccles
Social events	Anna Masefield
Social events	Angharad Walter
Social events	Becca Handley
Social events	Vicky Hallam
Social events	Ariana Rees-Roberts
Social events & policy review	Bego Carod Alonso
Social events & policy review	Mircea Iliescu
Community liaison & policy review	Julia Forman
Headteacher	Lisa Tuohy
Day Nursery Manager	Hanna Ochalik-Baca

The parents' committee met on **March 15th 2023** to discuss the news that had been announced in the Budget that day relating to childcare. It was agreed we need to see more details before making any decisions. We also discussed Ofsted clearances for new committee members, finances, policies, recruitment, staff wellbeing, safeguarding and social events.

The committee can be contacted independently of either nursery via ace.parents.committee@gmail.com. There is 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.

Term Dates

ACE Nursery School

Spring Term 2023

Thursday 30th March: last day of term

Friday 31st March: closed

Monday 3rd – Thursday 6th April inclusive: Easter holiday – playscheme. Places still available on Thursday 6th April. Please get in touch if you are interested. The office isn't staffed every day during the holiday so it's best to call our landline with any important messages

Friday 7th April - Monday 17th April inclusive: closed for Easter holiday

Summer Term 2023

Tuesday 18th April: first day of term

Monday 1st May: closed for May Day Bank holiday

Monday 8th May: closed for Coronation Bank holiday

Monday 29th May - Friday 2nd June: half-term holiday. Holiday playscheme available from Tuesday 30th May - Friday 2nd June inclusive. Closed on Monday 29th May for the Spring Bank holiday

Thursday 20th July: last day of term

Friday 21st July: closed

Monday 24th July - Friday 18th August inclusive: Summer holiday playscheme

ACE Day Nursery

Spring Term 2023

Friday 7th – Friday 14th April inclusive: Easter holiday closure period

Summer Term 2023

Monday 1st May: closed for May Day Bank holiday

Monday 8th May: closed for Coronation Bank holiday

Monday 29th May: closed for Spring Bank holiday

Friday 18th August - Thursday 31st August inclusive: Summer holiday closure period

Full term dates for the Day Nursery and the Nursery School are available on our website.

Upcoming Social Events

Parents' drinks evening - Wednesday 17th May, 7.30pm, pub (venue tbc)

Teddy Bears' Picnic – Saturday 24th June, 2-4pm, Wandlebury

