



ACE Nursery School & ACE Day Nursery



NEWSLETTER



March 2024



The Spring Term has flown by, albeit a slightly shorter one with the early Easter this year, but it certainly hasn't been short on activities! The undeniable highlight has been the presence of our delightful chicks, spreading joy throughout Big and Little ACE. From World Book Day to St Patrick's Day, our calendar has been brimming with festivities. And, as always, parental involvement remains a cornerstone of nursery life, enhancing our experiences in countless ways. This term, parents and grandparents have broadened our horizons by sharing insights into festivals including Nowruz and Purim, as well as enlightening us about surgical robots, science and serenading us with beautiful music. Their contributions have enriched our learning journey.



Nursery School News

The main news items we would like to share with you this month are: the chicks, our World Book Day celebrations, Miro and Banksy inspired art, and the fascinating visits we've had from parents.

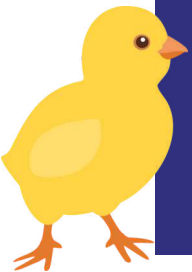


Feathered fun with our chirpy chicks!

We received eleven embryo eggs and were thrilled to see all of them hatch by Thursday of the first week. We saw some of the chicks emerge from their shells, before being moved to the brooder box, and cared for them over the fortnight.

Laughter filled the room as they flapped their little wings and climbed over one another to get to the food placed on the newspaper. It's incredible how gentle all the boys and girls have been with our visitors. Handling the chicks under careful adult supervision is a really positive experience for everyone; we all learnt quickly how important it is to be quiet and respectful.

Observational drawings were created in the art room, noting changes in the chicks' appearance since they were born - their wing feathers were different, their feet were bigger and when they stood up they were much taller.



We were delighted so many children invited their parents to meet the chicks at pick up time. This is the first year that we organised the chicks to be here over the weekend that we hold the Spring Fayre and we will definitely do it again. It inspired a collaborative piece of chick art – thank you Ariana, Luca’s mummy, for painting the background scene to which feathers were then attached.

Harry’s grandmother supplied us with another very interesting item (the last one was a badger’s skull when we were exploring skeletons) to go with the chick theme – an ostrich egg, which had come all the way from South Africa. The size comparison was enormous with the eggs the chicks had emerged from. Thank you so much; the children were very careful with the egg shell.



Spreading the joy

New bark was delivered for the garden. The children eagerly watched as the mechanical arm transported two large bags of bark over the garden wall. Excitement filled the air as they eagerly set to work spreading it around the garden. They brought all sorts of containers to be filled, including wheelbarrows, buckets, and even some teacups!

Page Turning Adventures on World Book Day

On World Book Day, many children brought their favourite books from home and dressed up as beloved book characters. We read books like 'Zog and the Flying Doctors', 'Peter Pan', 'Tabby McTat', 'Nibbles the Book Monster', 'Silly Suzy Goose', 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea' and much more. We had a couple of Elsas at ACE as well as a dragon, giraffe, knight, lion, Paddington bear, Willy Wonka, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Tinkerbell, Pippi Longstocking and Princess Pearl. The day was filled with storytelling, performances, and even a teachers production of 'The Smartest Giant in Town.' Thanks to everyone for joining in this celebration of literacy.



We have a number of [book recommendations](#) on our website, including those with strong female protagonists in celebration of International Women's Day.

Following on from World Book Day and linking in with the local community, we took a group of children to the Amnesty bookshop on Mill Road. The shop manager was very welcoming and said that since we were local, they would reduce the price of the books to £1 each. A great selection was purchased and the children brought them back to share with friends at nursery.



Brushes and Banksy: A Sprouting Tribute to Artistic Mischief

In the art room we ran a project on the artist Miro. We looked at some of his works and used them as inspiration for our own paintings. As an extension to this topic, we learnt about living artists and then Diana read about the latest Banksy work in Finsbury Park where she grew up. We looked at his tree mural: a woman holding a pressure washer, having apparently sprayed green paint up the side of a house. Viewed with the tree in the foreground, the green paint mimics the foliage of the plant which has been pollarded. This inspired us to come up with a large scale art work on a similar theme. We offered the boys and girls an assortment of green paint, paper, crayons and twigs along with a photo of the latest Banksy tree painting. We explained how no-one knows who he is as he does his paintings in the middle of the night. The children's response looks wonderful and is currently adorning one of the puzzle room walls.

We thought Banksy should know about the ACE tree so we sent a message to his email address (amusingly it is presscontrol@pestcontroloffice.com). A response was received, "Diana, We love this. Thank you for sending it to us. It made us all smile."



Parent visits ignite curiosity

Thank you to everyone who has been in to share their professions and interests with the children. It's really inspiring and we're confident that future scientists and musicians will credit you with having sparked their career interests at ACE!



Tanya (Chehrie), visited us to share about Nowruz, the Persian New Year. Celebrated widely across Iran, Afghanistan, the Balkans, parts of Turkey, central Asia and parts of the Arab World it marks the start of the new year and coincides with the Spring equinox. Tanya brought in objects used to set their new year table and introduced us to each one, including garlic for health, a mirror for self-reflection, an apple for beauty, coins for wealth, oleander for love and hyacinths for renewal. The book of poems by Hafez symbolises wisdom. We also enjoyed dancing to Iranian music.

Rachael (Iris), talked to us about road safety. She read a book on the topic and brought in road signs she had made for us to play a matching game with. We reinforce road safety with the children when we are out on trips e.g. discussing safe places to cross roads. The [ROSPA website](https://www.royalsociety.org/subjects/road-safety/) ([Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents](https://www.royalsociety.org/subjects/road-safety/)) has lots of useful information about how parents can talk to young children about road safety.



Ben (Shaya), enlightened us about the Jewish festival of Purim. Children often dress up for Purim and Shaya came in his dinosaur outfit. Atira, Shaya's mummy, kindly made us some Hamentashen biscuits that are traditionally eaten at this time of year. They are a triangular shaped biscuit filled with either jam or chocolate.





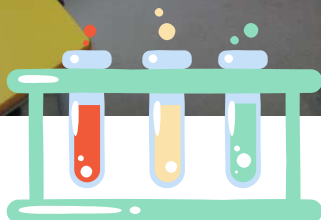
Geoff (Iris) came in with his band mate Helen and a variety of instruments. They introduced the different sounds to the children (guitar, clarinet, melodica and some percussion instruments) through a range of songs that we joined in with.



Ed (James) told us about a surgical robotic arm called Versius and how it is being used to make surgery easier. We started with a conversation about what surgery is, why we might need it and who does it. We played the game Operation to illustrate how hard it is to do surgery and then looked at the robotic arm as a way of assisting the process. It doesn't get tired like a surgeon might!



Charlotte (Thomas) came in to tell us about her role as a scientist. She explained the safety measures that are taken at work (e.g. wearing goggles and white coats) before demonstrating some mixing and separating experiments with pens and food dye. The children had a go at moving liquids in pipettes into petri dishes and test tubes, as well as onto chromatography paper. Charlotte kindly left us with spare equipment to experiment with at ACE.



Day Nursery News

We'd like to share a number of news items with you in this edition including Priory bear, our Mother's Day tea, St Patrick's Day celebrations, as well as visits to the chicks at Big ACE .

Bear-y Exciting Weekends for Priory Bear

At ACE Day Nursery, Priory Bear recently woke up from hibernation and has started going home with children for the weekends.

He's enjoyed visiting the ACE boys and girls to see where they live and has had fun joining in with their play and meal times, as well as listening to stories before bed time.

Priory Bear has been on walks and cycles around Cambridge in his back pack, joined in a pizza party, visited St John's College, helped to make dinner and slept in some comfy places.

Hosting Priory Bear for the weekend or during the holidays is a great way of linking home and nursery. We hope every child will want to take the bear home in turn and share moments together. We look forward to hearing about all his adventures.



Mother's Day Tea

On Monday 11th March we invited mummies and grandmothers to come and have tea with us. There was an amazing turnout; we welcomed sixteen mummies and one grandma who joined in with our play both indoors and outdoors. The boys and girls invited their special women to have fun with playdough, make necklaces out of red pasta, read books and draw. After playing, everyone came together for singing time and we shared our favourite nursery rhymes. As always, Sharon made a very tasty tea comprising cheese or egg sandwiches with cucumber and pepper sticks. To follow we enjoyed delicious scones made by Gabi and the children, with strawberry or apricot jam and cream on top!

Shamrock Shenanigans on St Patrick's Day

To celebrate St Patrick's Day Oscar's mummy, Sarah-Jane, his grandma, and even a mischievous leprechaun paid a special visit.



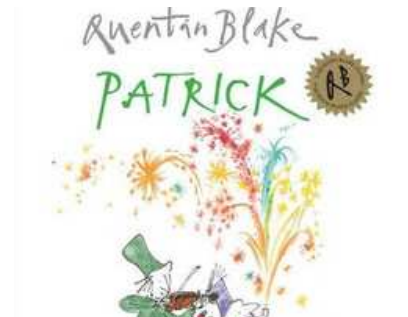
Oscar's grandma enchanted everyone with her banjo, strumming out lively tunes and leading us in cheerful rhymes. Then, Sarah-Jane whisked us away into the magical world of "Patrick" by Quentin Blake. We giggled as we imagined fish soaring through the air, cows dancing merrily, and trees sprouting cakes when Patrick played his violin!

But the fun didn't stop there. Our delightful visitors had surprises in store for us - jelly stickers shaped like shamrocks and tiny shamrock tokens to take home.

Touhida had an array of related activities lined up. In a corner of the room, she set up a sensory play area with green and white rice, orange lentils (mimicking the Irish flag) and plenty of shamrocks and lolly sticks. It was a delightful way for us to explore different textures, chat about colours, and learn new words like "shamrock." It's also good for encouraging play alongside peers and conversations between adults and children.

Come lunchtime, Sharon whipped up a feast fit for leprechauns - green lentil Bolognese with spaghetti, infused with basil for that vibrant hue. And for dessert? Yoghurt paired with green grapes, keeping the festive green theme alive.

St Patrick's Day was filled with laughter, learning, and lots of green fun!



Farewell to Sarah: A Touching Goodbye from Little ACE

On Friday 8th March we said goodbye to Sarah P who has worked at Little ACE since it was set up almost 20 years ago; she will be very much missed.

Lisa and Diana visited with a group of children from the Nursery School bringing cards, presents and flowers. It was an emotional day for Sarah and us all, and we finished off with a special tea comprising Sarah's favourite items from Sharon's culinary repertoire: veggie sausage rolls followed by scones (all made by Sharon) with jam and cream.

We're hoping to celebrate twenty years of the Day Nursery at our Teddy Bears' Picnic in June and Sarah P has put the date in her diary. We look forward to keeping in touch with her.

Inevitably after twenty years, a number of things need updating so we've just had our boiler replaced. Next on the list is re-roofing the slated section above the office and staffroom!



Special Friends' Day

To link in with our overarching spring term theme of "Families", Carmen invited "special friends" to come and play at our nursery one morning last week. It was lovely to see mummies, daddies, grand parents, an auntie (and newborn baby!) and a family friend happily joining in the play. The girls and boys confidently showed their guests around the nursery and proudly introduced them to their friends. It was great to hear such positive feedback at the end of the session e.g. how lovely it is to see the children in their own special place; there is a calm and welcoming environment at the nursery.

An egg-citing encounter

Little ACE children have been to visit the chicks at Big ACE. One group saw them in the incubator when they had just hatched and the other group were able to hold the chicks as part of circle time. Thank you Big ACE; we all had an amazing time.



Spring Fayre

We enjoyed a lovely afternoon with pleasant weather for our annual Spring Fayre. From a very popular Easter Egg hunt to a special visit from the Easter Bunny, a fun time was had by all. Our adorable chicks were a hit, and there were plenty of delicious and creative cakes, spring-themed arts and crafts, and garden games for everyone to enjoy. A big thank you to all the parents who helped make this event a success and a special thank you to Ariana (Luca's mummy) for organising it all.















Staff News



Baby Mateo Visits ACE

We were delighted to welcome Maria and baby Mateo (born at the end of January) to the Nursery School for a visit. The staff were all keen on some cuddles! Maria returned a few days later when she brought her family to the Spring Fayre to catch up with some of the parents of her key children.



Hello Vera!

Welcome to Vera who has joined us at the Day Nursery and is settling in well.

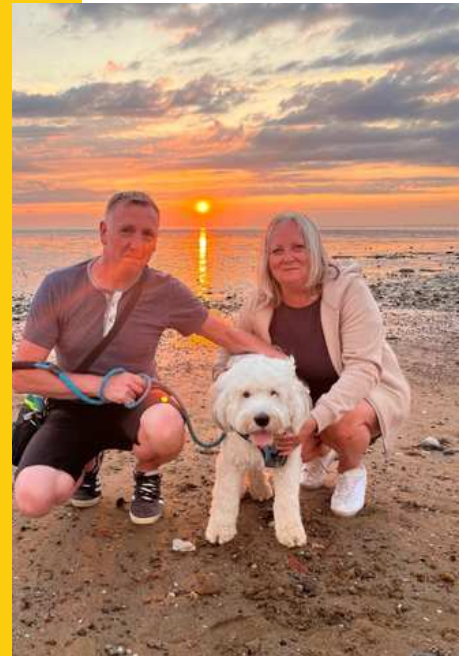


Get to know the team: Sharon, ACE Day Nursery

Hello, my name is Sharon and I was born in Cambridge in 1961. I have been the cook at ACE Day Nursery for just over sixteen years and I really enjoy cooking and working with the children. Every day is different but enjoyable.

I have four adult children and two adult step children. I also have fourteen grandchildren whose ages range from two to twenty-two years old. Just recently I became a great grandma too! I try to spend equal amounts of time with the grandchildren as well as with my husband Shaun and pet Tibetan Terrier dog called Teddy. We got the opportunity to give a good home to Teddy eighteen months ago as the original owner could not keep him any more for personal reasons. Teddy keeps us on our toes so he has plenty of walks and is still in training.

I am a very busy lady with work and home life but I would not want it any other way. When I do have some free time, I like to spend time in my garden, eating out and going to the cinema.



Co-op Hours

A huge thank you to all parents at ACE for your invaluable contributions to our cooperative hours system. Your dedication and commitment play a vital role in keeping our nurseries running smoothly. Your collective efforts not only support the day-to-day operations but also foster a sense of community and collaboration within our ACE family.

Spring Fayre

Thanks so much to Ariana (Luca's mummy) for organising the event as well as making signs and painting artwork to use at the fayre. The volunteer team were fantastic; thank you all: Yashi (Arna), Eleni (Daniele), Tal and Tali (Yulie), Daniela and Kevin (Leo), Kayvan (Chehie), Tom and Valerie (Helen), Lucy (Harry), Adriana (Felix), Charlie and Clara (Gabriel), Beccy (Hazel), Harriet and Charlie (Florence), Graham (Thomas), Tim (Tin Lam), Grant (Elizabeth), Klaske (Julius), Gozde and Murat (Kayi), Bleddyn (Leyna), Leo (Caius), Julia (Rebecca), Ellie (Rowan).



Big ACE Hours

Laundry team: Jocasta (Rio), Sophie (Marina), Jon (Clara), Rohanne (Clemmie), Daniela (Arthur).

Hedge trimming: Valerie (Helen)

Gardening: Hero (Tilda)

Shopping: Sophie (Marina), Carlos (Eusebio), Mehmet and Zeynep (Naz), Andreia (Maria),

Tip run: Jack (Luka)

Mending books: Lucy (James)

Coming in to talk to the children: Ben (Shaya), Ed (James), Rachael and Geoff (Iris), Tanya (Chehie), Charlotte (Thomas)

Painting children's chairs: Ellie and Leo (Rowan), Ana (Luka)



Little ACE Hours

Buying compost and seeds: Hannah (Myles);

Taking away an old printer and replacing the doorbell: Andi (Leopold);

Mending the gate: Alex (Sophie);

Laundry team: Elaine and Alex (Sophie), Sarah-Jane and Dave (Oscar), Daniela and Kevin (Leo);

Making mud kitchen table (pictured below left) and fixing towel dispenser: Peter (Senan);

Cooking with the children and taking an old toy to the charity shop: Atria (Noa);

Taking old sofa to the tip and buying soil: Bob (Lila);

Buying and fitting new blind: Mike (Flora);

Planting seeds with the children and looking after seedlings over the break: Diederik (Constantijn);

Gardening and singing session: Rebecca (Esther);

Updating website: Sargon (Nura);

St Patrick's day celebrations: Sarah-Jane (Oscar) and Oscar's grandma.

Tom (Bela) for various **maintenance tasks;**

Taking furniture to the tip: Tal and Tali (Yulie);

Fixing the oven handle and other maintenance jobs: Joao (Maria)

Lots of maintenance tasks and making mud kitchen items: Etai (Maya).

Purim crown making: Ellie (Nuri)

Useful Information



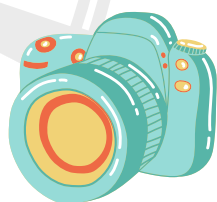
Primary School Admissions

Primary school places will be announced on 16th April. Please do let us know which school your child will be going to. We usually put together a list to share with other ACE parents who opt in, so you can organise playdates with children going to the same school.

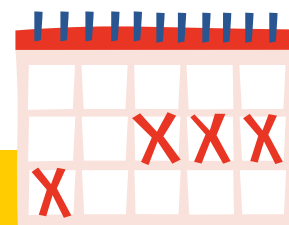


Class photos

A photo of the 2024 class of ACE children and staff will take place on **Thursday 13th June**. The Nursery School photo will be taken at 10.00am and the Day Nursery one at 11.15am. If your child doesn't attend ACE on a Thursday, please try and bring your son/daughter in if at all possible as it would be wonderful to have everyone in the picture (arriving by 9.45am for the Big ACE photo and by 11.00am for the Little ACE one). Hard copies will be available to buy afterwards.



Upcoming Social Events



Playground meet up: Sunday 21st April, 2 - 4pm hosted by Julia (Rebecca) and Mircea (Felix) at Chesterton Recreation Ground

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

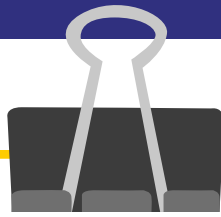
Playground meeting up: Sunday 19th May, 2 - 4pm hosted by Julia (Rebecca) and Orla (Conor). Location tbc.

Teddy Bears' Picnic: Saturday 22nd June, 2 - 4pm at Wandlebury

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

Pumpkin party: Sunday 20th October, 2 - 4pm at ACE Nursery School

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



Term Dates



Day Nursery

Spring Term 2024

Thursday 28th March: last day of term

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

Summer Term 2024

Monday 8th April: First day of term

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: first day of term

Nursery School

Spring Term 2024

Wednesday 27th March: Last day of term

Monday 8th – Friday 12th April: holiday playscheme. The office will not be staffed every day during the playscheme, so please phone (rather than emailing) for a more immediate response and with any urgent messages.

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

The Committee



The ACE parents' committee met on 28th February. We discussed the expansion of early years funding, policies, social events, staffing and nursery activities. We also received some safeguarding training.

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

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.

Spring has sprung!



It's wonderful to see that the bulbs the children took home in boots, as well as pumpkin seeds planted at ACE, are thriving at home.



The Great Giraffe Hunt!

Over the break, you might like to try the Cambridge Standing Tall sculpture trail which runs until 2nd June 2024. It's delivered by local charity, Break, and there are 31 large giraffes as well as 60 mini ones located around the City. Evie is the giraffe nearest to Big ACE with electric green bolts which are charged by the sun to illuminate her at night.

Let's see if between us, we can find all 91 giraffes! Please send in your photos of the giraffes you've found along with their location and we will turn all the pictures into a collage.

We've also been making our own giraffe at the Nursery School and the children are in charge of deciding how to decorate it!



Wishing everyone a relaxing break and we look forward to welcoming children attending the Nursery School playscheme from the 8th -12th April. We will see you all back for the start of the Summer Term on **Monday 8th April** at Little ACE and **Tuesday 16th April** at Big ACE.

