



ACE Nursery School & ACE Day Nursery



NEWSLETTER



May 2024



The first half of the summer term has flown past. We've just celebrated the 20th anniversary of the opening of ACE Day Nursery and there will be more Little ACE birthday festivities at the Teddy Bears' Picnic on Saturday 22nd June, 2-4pm, so please save the date! There have been giraffe and planting activities at both nurseries, lots of parental support via co-op hours and forest school sessions have re-commenced at Little ACE as you can see from the photo above! Read on for news from both nurseries as well as dates for your diary.



Day Nursery News

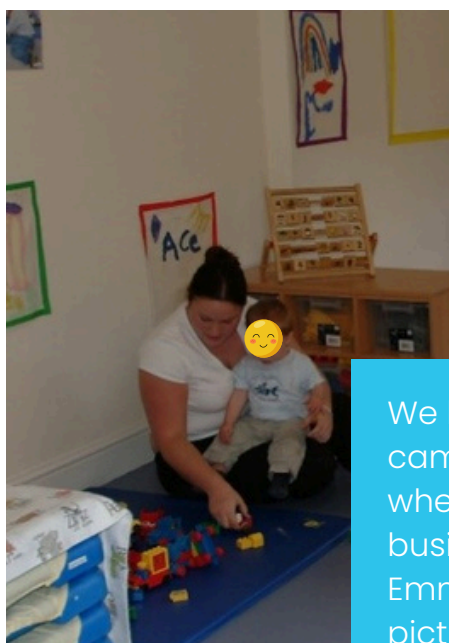
Our main news is that ACE Day Nursery has just turned 20 years of age! We enjoyed a special birthday tea cooked by Sharon last Friday and look forward to more celebrations as part of the Teddy Bears' Picnic on 22nd June. We have also celebrated Earth Day, run a giraffe project, learnt about dogs and started forest school sessions.

Happy 20th to ACE Day Nursery!

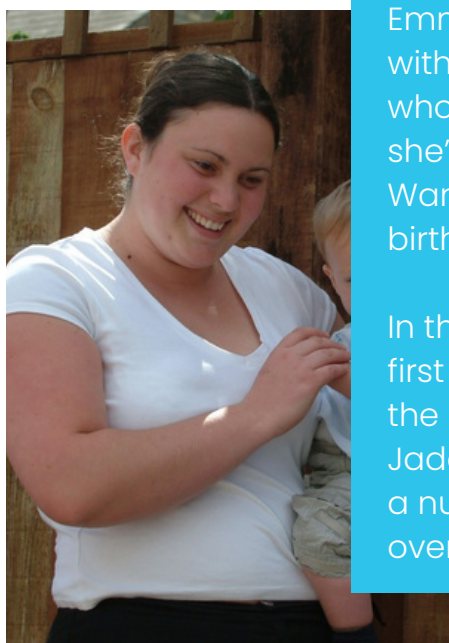
Last Friday 17th May we celebrated our birthday. We decorated the nursery (as best we could given the scaffolding was still up!) with bunting and banners. Lisa and Lindsey visited from the Nursery School with a group of Big ACE children and brought us a handmade card together with some yellow ACE coloured flowers! In the afternoon Sharon made a special birthday tea for us comprising (vegetarian) sausage rolls, strawberries and scones. We blew out our 20 candles and sang happy birthday to ACE! We look forward to continuing the party in June.



20 YEARS



We had a little dig in the archives and came across these photos from when the Day Nursery opened for business in May 2004. The manager, Emma, can be seen here in the pictures with the first child to join us. Emma is now an Early Years Adviser with Cambridgeshire County Council whom we keep in touch with; in fact, she's planning to join us in Wandlebury for our second round of birthday celebrations.



In the top left photo you can see the first three staff members: Emma on the right, Sarah in the middle and Jade on the left (who was Deputy for a number of years after Sarah took over as manager).

Earth Day fun takes flight

We joined in with Earth Day – celebrating nature and our planet – by making our own bird seed feeders. We mixed dried seeds with melted coconut oil and then filled eco-friendly biodegradable pots with the mixture. After leaving it to set, the children took their feeders home and we hung some up in the ACE garden. Natalie and Carmen also took a couple to Logan's Meadow as part of our forest school activities

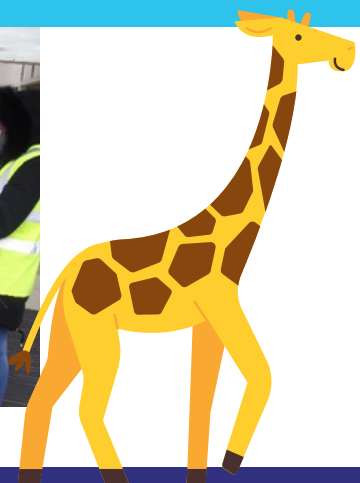


We enjoyed lots of sensory play using natural resources – e.g flower petals and leaves – that Natalie collected. We also made pictures by sticking leaves and flowers to different coloured paper. We finished off Earth Day by enjoying an outdoor tea in the garden. We set out blankets and ate our sandwiches with cucumber sticks in the fresh air.



Little ACE Tackles a Tall Project

On one of our regular trips to the library led by Carmen and Vera, we spotted some of the giraffes that are part of the Standing Tall art trail in Cambridge. This kicked off our giraffe project. We found out that Big ACE was making its own giraffe from recycled materials so we decided to create our own at Little ACE.



Vera offered to take the lead; it was her first project with us and took about two weeks. She started by gathering the children together and deciding what we could use to construct a giraffe. We put together some boxes and then Vera suggested adding layers of papier-mâché to strengthen the shape. We stirred together flour with glue and water and dipped sheets of newspaper in the mixture. Once the model had dried, the boys and girls started to paint it as well as adding a range of media and materials given to us by our neighbour, the architects Saunders Boston.



With glue sticks, the children were busy adding fabric samples and other items to the model. Then the boys and girls added their handprints in yellow paint. Some of the time we worked on the giraffe out in the mud kitchen area and at other times in the playroom, depending on the weather. Vera added a "Little ACE" name to the front of the work of art and Yashi (Arna's mummy) kindly transported the giraffe to Big ACE to meet up with its sibling! We plan a joint outing to Parker's Piece with both giraffes to meet their counterparts.



Kelper gives us paws for thought

Elaine (Sophie's mummy) has been into nursery twice recently to talk to us about dogs. The idea came to Elaine because their family dog is gentle and friendly, and she realised that children might think all dogs are the same. Elaine did lots of research and brought in visual materials from the RSPCA to aid the discussion. The first session was about understanding dogs a bit more and how to read their behaviour e.g. when are they happy or worried? We sat in the garden and the children responded well by taking part in the conversation and sharing if they have dogs at home and what they do with them.

For the second session, Elaine brought in the family's dog who is called Kelper. We put into practice what we had learnt the previous week and patted the dog after checking that he looked happy for us to approach him. This also links well with our forest school sessions as we come across dogs in Logan's Meadow. Some are on leads and others not, so hopefully we are now all better equipped to know what to do when dogs come over.

RSPCA Understanding dog behaviour
YOUR DOG'S BODY LANGUAGE CAN HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY ARE FEELING

A happy dog

A dog who is happy will be relaxed.

- 1 Dog has a relaxed body posture, smooth hair, mouth open and relaxed, ears in natural position, wagging tail, eyes normal shape.
- 2 Dog is inviting play with bottom raised, smooth hair, high wagging tail, eyes normal shape, ears in natural position, may be barking excitedly.
- 3 Dog's weight is distributed across all four paws, smooth hair, tail wagging, face is interested and alert, relaxed and mouth open.

A worried dog

These dogs are telling you that they are uncomfortable and don't want you to go near them.

- 1 Dog is standing but body posture and head position is low. Tail is tucked under, ears are back and dog is yawning.
- 2 Dog is lying down and avoiding eye contact or turning head away from you and lip licking and ears are back.
- 3 Dog is sitting with head lowered, ears are back, tail tucked away, not making eye contact, yawning, raising a front paw.

An angry or very unhappy dog

These dogs are not happy and want you to stay away or go away.

- 1 Dog is standing with a stiffened body posture, weight forward, ears are up, hair raised, eyes looking at you - pupils dark and enlarged, tail is up and stiff, wrinkled nose.
- 2 Dog is lying down cowering, ears flat, teeth showing, tail down between legs.
- 3 Dog is standing with body down and weight towards the back, head is tilted upwards, mouth tight, lips drawn back, teeth exposed, eyes staring, ears back and down, snarling.

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Whitburn City, Southwark, Ipswich, West Sussex, R012 9RQ
www.rspca.org.uk, 0300 330999, RSPCA, White, London, E9 6EH
The RSPCA helps animals in England and Wales. Registered charity no. 213099. The RSPCA only exists with the support of public donations.
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Nursery School News

The overarching summer term theme is *Movement*; we've undertaken a number of outings and activities relating to this topic. Parkside Bear has also been on the move. We've taken the Cambridge Standing Tall trail as inspiration for a project on giraffes and been busy with planting activities given it's spring. Lots of parents have visited to read, help out and tell us about their work or interests – thank you all.

Active Adventures at ACE

We've been brainstorming about our main theme – Movement – and following the interests of the children. As we have some keen footballers, we thought we should organise a kick around on Parker's Piece (opposite the nursery) which some argue was the birthplace of the game after a group of students wrote down rules in 1848. These "Cambridge Rules" became the defining influence on the 1863 Football Association rules. Football was regularly played on Parker's Piece in the 19th century, as described in the following quotation from the Master of Jesus College in 1838, "...we passed by Parker's Piece and there saw some forty Gownsmen playing at football. The novelty and liveliness of the scene were amusing!" He might have said the same about the ACE match last week!



Although the ACE game was played in rainy conditions, it didn't dampen spirits and the players were un-phased by the weather. After a warm up session, we practised some dribbling and passes before the match got underway. There was a lot of excellent defending – with several children keen to be goalkeeper – as well as many shots on goal. We enjoyed a half time drink, extra time, a few tricks and the final score was 4 – 4.





Lily, one of our staff members, is a keen ballroom dancer so has been teaching us a number of different dances, including the cha-cha-cha and tango pictured below. She shared videos of her taking part in competitions when she was younger and photos of her performing. We discovered it was a great way of moving our bodies and getting some exercise indoors! Along with learning dance, the boys and girls found how challenging it is to have three legs between two people! Everyone found it so funny and we'll definitely be holding a three legged race at sports day.



Having heard about all the dancing going on at ACE, Leo (Rowan's daddy) came in to show the girls and boys how to produce electronic music - after hearing it, they all had a dance to it!



We've also utilised the movement project as a way of thinking about numeracy and art, and have created a chart to record how the children travel to nursery each day. The girls and boys drew self-portraits to which we attached velcro so that each day they can place themselves in the appropriate column: (walk, bike, car, bus, train etc.) and compare the columns to see which is the 'most' / 'least' popular.





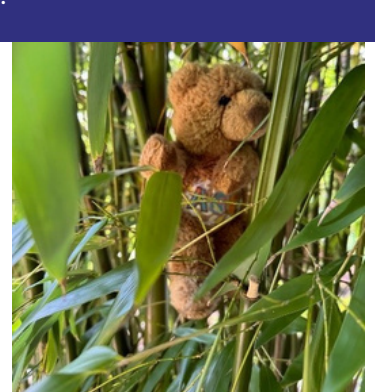
Finally, no project on movement would be complete without a visit to the train station. Lisa commutes by train each day and took some photos of the route she usually takes, which were then made into a map with photographic clues for the children to follow in order to find their way from ACE to the station. The staff kindly let us into the station so we could see trains arriving and departing.



Parkside Bear's Travels

Parkside Bear woke up from hibernation and since then, different children have been taking turns to look after him at home for a week. What adventures he is having! When he is brought back into ACE the child shares what they have been doing together with the rest of the group, and they are the one who picks a name out of a hat to decide who the next lucky child to look after our special bear will be.

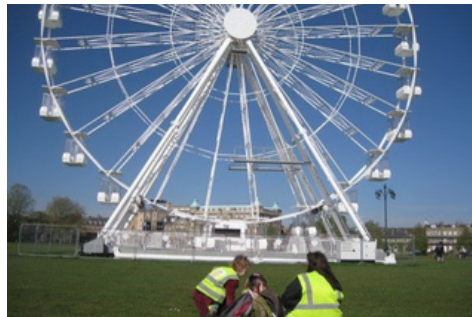
He's already had lots of fun out and about and at children's houses. He's been to a gymnastics class, fed the ducks, met the cows roaming around Cambridge, visited the Botanic gardens, attended a dinosaur show and joined in a painting session.



The children's artistic endeavours reach new heights!

Giraffes have featured heavily at ACE over the last few weeks after the children started to notice various giraffes on their way to nursery (there are three nearby on Parker's Piece!). This sparked a project on the long necked animals.

We organised an outing to visit the giraffes nearest to ACE as well as the Big Wheel (which we saw turning round – hence also linking to the movement theme!) We took our sketchpads and sat down to draw both the wheel and some of the giraffes.



Your children made a wonderful giraffe collage which has pride of place outside the puzzle room and is being adorned with the facts the children are finding out about them (why does the giraffe have a long neck? What is a group of giraffes called?) The display will also show how to write the word giraffe in other languages (thanks to parents who sent this information into us) e.g. Zürafa and 長頸鹿

The children made their own giraffe out of recycled materials, glue and paint, which stands at over 2m! As you've read, ACE Day Nursery also made one and Yashi (Arna's mummy) kindly transported it to the Nursery School; the pair have pride of place in the art room looking out over Parker's Piece. We are hoping to take them both onto Parker's Piece with children from both settings to meet the other giraffes over there.



Tasty snacks from little seeds grow

The children, through regular practice, are becoming experts preparing fruit for snack time. They have learnt how to wash the fruit and cut it up carefully as well as wiping down tables and organising the cups and plates for their friends to use. They even wash-up afterwards! When they are helping with the fruit and vegetables they sometimes notice the seeds and pips in the produce.



We harvested some of the seeds from cherry tomatoes that came with our weekly fruit/veg box to see if we could grow plants for the allotment. We squeezed them onto compost and left them on an indoor windowsill. A child then asked if she could do the same with pepper seeds. The latter have been taken home to grow into plants and we eagerly await the results! The tomatoes germinated and the seedlings grew quickly indoors before we planted them out in the allotment. The children were super impressed with how well they had grown.

With the warmer weather, the mud kitchen is particularly popular and we thought it would be good to have a range of herbs growing nearby that the boys and girls could use in their 'cooking'. Thanks to the families of Julius and Maria who bought us a wide range of herbs which we then planted out in troughs in the garden. The children will be able to pick the wonderful array of leaves to add to their mud kitchen creations.

The children helped Lisa to prepare the trough in the allotment, ready to sow runner beans and sun flowers. Thank you to all of you who have been bringing in compost we need for these projects. We came across some left-over bulbs from the spring bulb-in-a-boot project, and these were planted in the front garden, so we can expect a riot of colour next year!



A seed stall was set up in the front garden at home time for parents and children to choose a packet of seeds, fill a plant pot with compost and take them home to sow. Some have done so well and parents are sharing back with us the seedlings, which we have added to the allotment.



We like to cook in the actual basement kitchen whenever we get the chance, and as you can see in the picture, we recently made banana muffins. The whole nursery smelt delicious and there were enough for the staff to enjoy a taste!





Garden updates

The sand pit has been cleaned, refilled with fresh sand and is proving a very popular area of the garden, particularly on the sunny days.



A new playhouse arrived last week and was put up whilst we all looked on. We'll be adding a few more touches over the coming weeks e.g. a number 37 by the door, curtains and the alphabet wooden letters we had on the old playhouse.

Parents bring stories and science to life

Thanks to everyone who has been in recently. We've had several parents come in to read; some of the books were very on theme - Giraffes can't dance! Thank you Kate (Theo), Ariana (Luca), Ana (Luka), Sophie (Esme), Rachael (Iris) and Tanya (Chehrie). Thanks also to Rob (Conor) for coming in to teach us Makaton signing.



Bethany (Eusebio's mummy), talked to us about nudibranchs, soft bodied marine molluscs, as that's what she researches. Firstly she introduced what they are and showed us lots of different pictures. Then she talked a bit about molluscs that live in the sea and what she does when she is out in the field doing research. She brought in a range of shells that we felt and described, before deciding which were our favourites. We learnt that nudibranchs shed their shells after their larval stage and are noted for their often extraordinary colours and striking forms. It's estimated there are about 3,000 species. Julia Donaldson's book "Sharing a shell" linked in well with this talk.



Sophie (Esme) assisted the children with planting more herbs in the bath next to the mud kitchen.

Ana (Luka's mummy) read one of her own books which has been translated into many languages and she kindly gave copies to the children she met that morning where she had them in their home language.



Staff News



Get to know the team: Hanna, ACE Day Nursery

My name is Hanna and I am originally from Poland where I completed a Master's degree in pedagogy, specialising in rehabilitation, in 2004. In the same year, my best friend and I decided to come to England. The plan was to stay no more than 3 years and learn English, but I've now called Cambridge and England home for the last 20 years!

I joined ACE Nursery School in September 2014 as an Early Years Practitioner after being interviewed by Lisa and Lindsey. I was lucky enough to work with them for almost 5 years. I'm very grateful for my time at Big ACE, getting to know Lisa and the rest of the team, but mainly for having the opportunity to discover such an amazing setting full of passion and enthusiasm for the early years.



Then I decided I needed a change in my life and I wanted to try something new which was linked more to what I had studied in Poland, so I applied for a Prison Officer's job at HMP in Peterborough. This was a remarkable experience and one which I don't regret as it gave me a different outlook on life. After six months of training and working very long hours, Lindsey from Big ACE messaged me and said "Sarah from Little ACE is looking for a new Deputy, I think you should apply"- and I did! That's how my journey started at ACE Day Nursery. From June 2019 I worked alongside Sarah who was a great mentor as I took on a management role. When she went on maternity leave in early 2023, I was the acting Manager – supported by Lisa – and learnt a lot each day! I was delighted to be asked to take on the Manager role full-time in March this year when Sarah decided to leave ACE after 19 years of service to spend more time with her young son. We are often in touch and she sent Little ACE 20th birthday wishes last week. I'm sure she will be at Wandlebury to celebrate with us next month. I'm just about to celebrate five years at Little ACE!

When I'm not at ACE I spend lots of time on the football pitch with my 13 year old son as he plays for two football teams and his dream is to be a famous footballer like Robert Lewandowski. As a family we love spending time together, travelling and getting to know new cultures and people. My husband does some maintenance work for ACE out of hours and so is also quite involved with the nursery!

Co-op Hours

Thank you immensely to all ACE parents for your essential contributions to our cooperative hours system. Your commitment ensures the smooth operation of our nurseries and strengthens the community spirit within the ACE family.

Big ACE Hours

Chairs: thanks to Rowan's parents (Leo and Ellie) for the lovely painted chairs shown below.

Painting the concrete tunnel in the garden: Frank (Dapna)

Tip runs: Friso (Julius) and Harriet and Charles (Florence)

Laundry: Jocasta (Rio), John and Hero (Tilda), Ailsa (Rein), Bethany (Eusebio), Grant and Silvia (Elizabeth) and Sophie (Esme)

Compost purchases: Charles (Florence), Sophie (Esme), Bleddyn (Leyna) and Ed (Otis)

Herb buying: Andreia (Maria) and Friso (Julius)

Weekly shopping: Sophie and Giles (Marina), Andreia (Maria), Mehmet and Zeynep (Naz), Charlotte and Graham (Thomas)

Shredding: Charles (Florence), Aamir (Daniyal), Tim and Bell (Tin Lam), Mayu (Sara), Jack (Luka), Bleddyn (Leyna)

Parent visits: Bethany (Eusebio), Ana (Luka), Ariana (Luca), Rachael (Iris), Kate (Theo), Leo (Rowan), Sophie (Esme), Rob (Conor)

Renovating wooden alphabet blocks: Lampros (Mariela)

Poster design: Mayu (Sara) and Kirstie (Hilda)

Gardening: Hero and John (Tilda), Oliver (Max)

Sewing: Oliver (Max) and Rohanne (Clemmie)

Garden maintenance: Chris and Ailsa (Rein)

Cooking: Sophie (Esme) and Tabitha (Otis)

Website and IT: Sargon (Yohan)

Playground gatherings: Julia (Rebecca), Mircea (Felix) and Orla (Conor)

Little ACE Hours

Donating bird seed to us for Earth Day: Jon and Hanna (James):

Laundry team: Hannah (Myles), Atira and Ben (Noa), Mike and Victoria (Flora), Daniela and Kevin (Leo)

Website and logo design: Sargon (Nura)

Wooden stools: Etai (Maya)

Mud kitchen soil box repairs/renovation: Joao (Maria)

Renovating our lock/door board and coming in to celebrate čarodějnice, the start of spring in the Czech Republic: Tomas and Veronika (Bela)

Parent visits: Archaeology talk (Maya), Reading dogs by Elaine (Sophie)

Varnishing the bird feeder: Hannah (Myles)

Buying compost and strawberry plants, repainting the vegetable plot caterpillar, strengthening the fence, tip run: Andi (Leopold)

Buying compost and seeds: Sarah-Jane and Dave (Oscar)

Gardening: Elaine (Sophie) and Amy (Lila)
Poster design and taking our giraffe to Big ACE: Yashi (Arna)

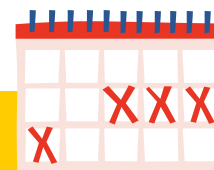


Notices



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



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

ACE Day Nursery

"Lunch box teas": Tuesday 6th and Thursday 8th August

Please bring in a lunch box for your child and Sharon - our cook - will serve tea in it (sandwiches, vegetables and fruit). This is good preparation for children moving to the Nursery School where the girls and boys enjoy a packed lunch each day.



Summer party: Tuesday 13th August, 3.30-5.15pm

Parents are welcome to join us as well as children who don't normally attend on a Tuesday who are accompanied by a parent or relative.



Sports Days

ACE Nursery School

Tuesday 2nd July, 9.30-11.15am on Parker's Piece.

ACE Day Nursery

Wednesday 31st July, 10.00-11.30am on the green opposite nursery (Barnwell Priory).

Parents are welcome to come and watch. If your child doesn't usually attend on one of the above days, they are invited to join in accompanied by a parent or relative.



Term Dates



Day Nursery

Summer Term 2024

Monday 27th May: Spring bank holiday: closed

Friday 16th August: last day of term

Monday 19th – Friday 30th August inclusive: closed

Autumn Term 2024

Monday 2nd September: first day of term, staggered start for new children

Nursery School

Summer Term 2024

Monday 27th – Friday 31st May: half-term holiday. (Playscheme running from Tuesday 28th May – Friday 31st May inclusive. Please call with any messages during the playscheme as the office is not staffed every day during holiday periods)

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 last meeting took place on 8 May. We continued our safeguarding training, received a finance update, had a discussion about fee and funding structures, reviewed policies, and planned social events (including celebration of the Day Nursery's 20th birthday).

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

Hanna Ochalik-Bacca: ACE Day Nursery Manager

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 (Day Nursery parent): Newsletter, social events and policy review

Mircea Iliescu: Social events

Orla Lynskey: Social events

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.

We will be looking for a number of parents to join the ACE Parents' Committee in November at our AGM so please get in touch if you are interested in learning more about the role.

