



Hi everyone!

We hope you've all had a lovely summer and are feeling ready for the exciting term ahead. Whether your child is returning after the break, continuing with us, or joining a new room—we're so looking forward to welcoming you all back over the next few days!

It's always such a special time of year, with new beginnings, fresh starts, and a real buzz around the nursery as we prepare for the term ahead.

Just a quick update: our newsletter will now be sent **every half term** instead of monthly. This means we'll be able to share even more highlights, important updates, and snapshots of all the wonderful things your little ones are getting up to.

We can't wait to see all the children settling in, exploring their new rooms, and reconnecting with friends (and making new ones too!).

Here's to a fantastic start to the new academic year!

Warm wishes,

Lorna



DATES FOR THE DIARY

Open Evening to all parents
Wednesday 3rd September 5-7pm

Preschool Graduation
Saturday 27th June

Stay and Plays
Christmas Friday 12th December
Mother's day Friday 13th March
Father's day Friday 19th June

Parents Evenings
TBC

Photography visits
Friday 14th June
June 2026—TBC

School Transition information evening
Wednesday 1st October 6:15-7:15pm
Wednesday 22nd April 6:15-7:15pm





LITTLE ACORNS



Hello! We are Emily and Char, and we are the Room Leaders for Little Acorns. Emily for our younger side and Char for the slightly older!

We are so excited to be starting another term with our wonderful babies—watching them grow, learn, and develop new skills is always a joy. I'll be working alongside Katie, Hydie, Chloe and Sara all of whom bring valuable experience and a genuine passion for supporting young children's development.

At Little Acorns, we nurture the foundations of early development with care and intention. We focus on the three prime areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Physically, we support children through key developmental milestones — from crawling and cruising to those exciting first steps. In communication, we gently encourage early interaction through non-verbal cues, gestures, and eventually, first words. We place a strong emphasis on fostering age-appropriate language skills to help children express themselves with confidence.

Sara, a valued member of our team, is especially skilled in Makaton, a fantastic tool that supports and simplifies communication. Makaton can be incredibly beneficial in helping children understand and be understood during their early language journey.

Each day, we enjoy circle times in both the morning and afternoon. These special moments include stories, singing, and musical instruments — all designed to spark imagination, support language development, and build self-confidence.

We also make the most of the great outdoors. Our children have daily opportunities to explore, run, climb, and play, helping them to develop coordination, strength, and a love for the natural world.

At Little Acorns, we aim to create a warm, engaging, and supportive environment where every child can grow, learn, and thrive at their own pace.

Over the summer, our focus has been on developing communication skills. We've explored this through a variety of small world activities themed around animals, providing consistent exposure to key vocabulary. By repeating familiar words in engaging contexts, we've helped the children begin to understand—and even say—new words. Music time has also been a big part of our routine, as it's a fantastic way to support language development. Using instruments, scarves, and interactive songs, we've kept the children engaged while encouraging verbal and non-verbal communication.

We're looking forward to another fantastic term full of learning, play, and discovery!



TINY ACORNS

Hi all, my name is Elli, and I'm absolutely thrilled to be stepping into this brand-new role as Room Leader for our Tiny acorns room.

Joining me in the running of the room will be Kerri, Chloe, and Vicky. Together we have a wealth of early years knowledge, and we are all just as equally excited about our new team.

After such a rewarding time working with our preschoolers, I'm embracing this exciting change with open arms and an open heart. There's something incredibly special about working with our youngest children — being part of their very first steps in the world, helping them feel safe, secure, and supported from day one.

This new age group brings a whole new world of moments to cherish — from first smiles and babbles to discovering the magic of connection and curiosity. I'm so passionate about creating a calm, nurturing environment where every baby feels truly seen, heard, and cared for.

Supporting our babies through a gentle, thoughtful transition is my top priority. I want each child to feel confident and comforted as they settle into their new space. Just as importantly, I'm excited to build strong relationships with our new families — getting to know each parent, listening to their hopes, and working in partnership to ensure their little ones thrive.

While I'll miss my preschoolers, I feel deeply inspired by the opportunities ahead and all the special bonds waiting to be formed. I can't wait to start this new chapter and give our babies the best possible start in their journey.



SUPER SEEDLINGS

Super Seedlings have had a very busy summer! One of the highlights was watching tiny caterpillars transform into beautiful butterflies. We took part in several exciting activities related to caterpillars and butterflies, including reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, singing *There's a Little Caterpillar on a Leaf*, and painting our very own caterpillars. The most magical moment was watching the butterflies fly away into the trees!

Over the holidays, we've enjoyed trips to the park, the library, and the school field. The children loved exploring different environments and developing their growing gross motor skills.

With the lovely weather, we've been spending even more time outdoors. Water play has been especially popular! One of our favourite activities was *I Had a Little Turtle*, where the children used water and soap to wash and play — there was lots of fun splashing, filling, emptying, and even getting a few friends wet.

It's also been wonderful to see your holiday photos — the children really enjoyed sharing them with their friends.

We're looking forward to new adventures and plenty of fun in our new room starting this September! We can't wait to welcome our new children, as well as those moving up from the Baby Room. Exciting times ahead for all!

Lastly, we'd like to wish all the children moving up to pre-school the very best of luck. We are going to miss you all, but we know you'll absolutely love your time in pre-school!



MIGHTY OAKS

Hello! I'm Chloe, and from September I'll be stepping into the role of Room Leader for Mighty Oaks, moving over from my current position in Great Oaks.

I'm absolutely thrilled to be joined by a fantastic team in Little Acorns!

- Dakota is moving over from our Super Seedlings room. She has recently completed her Level 3 qualification in Childcare, and brings a warm, nurturing approach that the children respond to beautifully.
- Maria is our nursery's Communication & Language Lead. Her passion for early communication – including speech and language development – makes her a wonderful asset to the team.
- Sarah, who holds a Level 5 qualification, will be joining us from the school, where she has been working as a 1:1 SEN Teaching Assistant. Her experience and understanding of individual needs will be invaluable in supporting all our children.
- Katie is transitioning from Little Acorns and brings with her a lovely, calm presence. She holds a Level 2 qualification and is currently working towards her Level 3. We're so pleased to have her continuing with us on the team.

I feel incredibly lucky to be working alongside such a dedicated and skilled group. Together, we're looking forward to a wonderful year ahead with your little ones!

We're all excited to support your children in their learning and development this year. Key worker assignments will be shared very soon, so you'll know who your child's main point of contact will be.

To help everyone settle into the new environment during the first few weeks, we'll be focusing on building strong relationships and creating a sense of belonging. As part of this transition, we'd love for you to send in one family photo. The children will decorate a frame for it, and we'll proudly display them in the room to help create a comforting and familiar space.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to speak to me or to Sarah, who is the Preschool Senior Lead.

We're so excited to welcome you to Mighty Oaks and look forward to a fun, supportive, and enriching year ahead!



GREAT OAKS

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all the children and parents joining us at Great Oaks – we're so excited to have you with us! Whether you're brand new to our nursery or moving into a new room, this marks the beginning of a special journey, and we feel privileged to be part of it. Over the coming weeks, we'll be focusing on helping the children settle in, build strong relationships, and feel happy and confident in their new environment.

We've got a fantastic term ahead, filled with fun, engaging, and stimulating activities designed to spark curiosity, encourage creativity, and support every child's development. From imaginative play to messy crafts, outdoor adventures to story time, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

We can't wait to get to know each and every one of you and work closely together to support your child as they learn, explore, and grow. Here's to a brilliant start at Great Oaks—we're so glad you're here!



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PANCO (PHYSICAL AND NUTRITIONAL COORDINATOR)

Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance

The following information is taken from our healthy packed lunch policy (September 2025)

The Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance provides lots of information on which foods to provide, limit and avoid in your child's diet. Please use these guidelines as a basis for your child's healthy packed lunch:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-nutrition

In line with guidance, please do not include the following items in your child's packed lunch as they are high in saturated fat, salt and or sugar and does not form part of a balanced nutritious diet:

- Sugary drinks including flavoured water, we are a milk and tap water only setting.
- Foods that contain artificial sweeteners (they encourage to develop a taste for sweet foods)
- Cakes and pastries (e.g. sausage rolls and pain au chocolate)
- Crisps
- Chocolate spread, chocolate coated biscuits, chocolate bars or sweets n
- Processed meat products such as sausages, bacon and peperoni
- Sweetened yoghurts, all yogurts provided for children must be in pots that require a spoon to eat. Yo-ghurts in tubes designed to be sucked can enhance tooth decay.
- Popcorn, popcorn is not recommended for any child under the age of five as it is a choking hazard
- Items that contain nuts as they can trigger a severe allergic reaction in some children.
- Leftover takeaway/fast food
- Any form of jelly sweet including fruit winders, Yoyo bear bars and fruity drops.



As we have an obligation to ensure our children are provided with balanced and nutritious meals, we will monitor packed lunches to ensure they meet our policy. If packed lunches don't meet our guidelines, we will send a leaflet home in your child's packed lunch box and discuss this with you.



HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER

ROAD SAFETY

As we are heading towards Autumn and winter now is the perfect time to start thinking about how to stay safe when walking to school and Nursery. It is estimated that each day 6 children are killed or seriously injured on roads in the UK.

Here at Acorn, we use the phrase 'stop, look, listen and think' when we take the children out for walks.

Stop, look, listen and think

Try to find a safe place to cross the road, always look for a pedestrian crossing such as zebra and pelican crossings. Here on Empingham road we are lucky to have a school crossing lady (Loli pop lady) Mrs Hutchinson who is always on hand to help everyone cross safely before and after school. Hold hands with children as you are crossing. Each time you cross the road, explain to your child/children how to stay safe when crossing the road. Explain that green means go, and red means stop.

Look both ways to see if you can spot any oncoming traffic, can you hear any cars?

When it is safe to cross, ensure you continue to look and listen as you walk across the road.

Stay alert, when walking with children put your mobile phones away and take out your ear pods so that you can talk about road safety and how to stay safe.

Be visible, when choosing a coat for children for the autumn and winter months, look for one that is brightly coloured or has reflective strips or patches.



Using a scooter or bike

If you or your child/children are cycling or using a scooter to get to school or Nursery always ensure you are all wearing properly fitted helmets.

Look out for signs to indicate that a pavement is suitable for pedestrians and cyclists. It is advised that all children shouldn't ride on roads until they are over the age of ten.

Driving to Nursery or school

If you are coming to school and nursery in a car, remember the speed limit is reduced to 20mph on Empingham Road. All children under 150cm should be seated in the correctly sized and fitted car seats. Children should not sit in the front of the car until they reach the age of 12, if you need to seat a young child in the front ensure that you deactivate the air bag. Always ensure you drive slowly when entering the Nursery car park, keep an eye out for children exiting the parked cars.



ELKLAN



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE TIP OF THE MONTH

NURSERY RHYME

I hear thunder, I hear thunder
 Hark don't you, hark don't you
 Pitter patter raindrops, pitter patter raindrops
 I'm wet through, so are you!

Symbolic and Imaginative Play

By 12 months, children begin to show an understanding of everyday objects by using them appropriately. This understanding extends beyond their own personal belongings. For example, they can now demonstrate the use of a wide range of spoons, not just their own plastic one, and use them in a variety of situations—not just at mealtimes.

By around 15 months, children begin to recognise dolls and teddies as representing people. They start to relate objects to these toys and act out everyday events, such as feeding a doll.

This symbolic stage is important because it suggests that the child understands that one object or picture can symbolise another—just as a word represents an object. When a child plays appropriately with teddies, dolls, and large doll-sized toys, it indicates that they are developing the ability to process symbolic information, and are also becoming ready for language development.

Ideas to Encourage Symbolic Play:

- Large dolls and teddies for pretend play
- Small-world play (e.g., toy houses, animals, and vehicles)
- Playing with pictures (e.g., pointing, naming, and storytelling)



We are proud to be a Communication Friendly Setting, recognised for the work we do in supporting children's speech, language and communication. Our staff are trained in ELKLAN, a nationally respected programme that helps us create the best environment for children to develop their talking and listening skills.

Good communication is the foundation for learning, making friends, and building confidence. In our nursery, we use simple but powerful strategies every day, such as giving children time to respond, repeating and expanding on what they say, and encouraging them to share their thoughts during play and story time.

How you can help at home:

- Share a book together every day – talk about the pictures and new words.
- Give your child time to answer questions, even if it takes a little while (counting to 10 in your mind gives children time to respond).
- Turn everyday moments into conversations – whether you're cooking, shopping, or walking to school.

Together, we can give children the best start in becoming confident communicators.

If you'd like more ideas, please ask any member of staff – we're always happy to share tips and resources.



HEALTHY RECIPE

BREAKFAST EGG MUFFINS

Ingredients

- 10 large eggs
- 1/3 cup half and half
- 1 cup (heaping) small diced cooked ham
- 3/4 cup finely chopped red bell pepper
- 2/3 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped green onions (thinly sliced white portion)
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 tsp salt, or to taste
- 1/2 tsp black pepper



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Crack eggs into a large mixing bowl and add half and half. Using a fork pierce the yolks then whisk with the fork until just combined.
3. Add ham, bell pepper, cheddar, green onions, parsley, salt, and pepper to the egg mixture. Stir with the fork.
4. Spray a 12-cup muffin pan well with non-stick cooking spray. Fill each with about 1/3 cup of the mixture (pour to fill each cup nearly to the top. Scoop near the bottom of the bowl with the measuring cup to get some of the mix-ins in each measurement).
5. Bake in a preheated oven until the eggs are just barely set, for about 19 – 23 minutes.
6. Let cool in the muffin tin for about 5 minutes then serve or cool on a wire rack for about 30 minutes if stored in the fridge or freezer.



DROP OFF/COLLECTION

With September fast approaching, we would like to share the procedures for dropping off and collecting your children from their rooms:

Mighty Oaks

Drop-off and collection: 7:30–9:00am & 3–6pm via the main entrance

Drop-off and collection: 9:00 & 3:00 via the year 2 gate (bottom of the ramp) and across the playground to the Mighty Oaks garden.

Great Oaks (formally Oak Leaf)

Drop-off: 7:30–8:00am via the main entrance

Collection: 4:30–6:00pm via the main entrance

Between 8:00am–4:30pm, please use the Great Oaks garden gate (entry system in place)

Super Seedlings

Drop-off & Collection: 7:30am–6:00pm via the main entrance

Tiny Acorns

Drop-off: 7:30–8:00am at Little Acorns (bottom gate)

8:00am–4:30pm at the top ramp gate (right-hand side)

Collection: 8:00am–4:30pm at the top ramp gate

4:30–6:00pm at Little Acorns (bottom gate)



Little Acorns

Drop-off & Collection: 7:30am–6:00pm at the Little Acorns gate



POGO

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving communication and enhancing how we support your child's learning and development, we will be moving from Tapestry to a new platform called POGO Progress.

POGO Progress will allow us to continue sharing your child's achievements and developmental progress in a more flexible, streamlined way. It supports how we track learning in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and also offers new tools that will make it even easier to stay connected with you.

What You Can Expect with POGO Progress:

- **Parental Access via App**
You'll be able to securely log in to the POGO app to view updates and observations of your child's learning journey.
- **Summative Reports**
We'll be using the platform to create and share end-of-term/period progress summaries, giving you a clear picture of your child's development.
- **Real-Time Observations**
As with Tapestry, we'll continue to upload regular snapshots of your child's activities and milestones — helping you feel involved and informed, even when you're not at nursery.
- **Book Parent Evenings Easily**
You'll be able to book parent meetings directly through the app, making scheduling simpler and more convenient.
- **Instant Notifications**
We'll also be using POGO to send key updates and reminders straight to your phone via text or app notifications — so you never miss important information.

We'll be sending out full guidance on how to log in and use the app before the start of term, and we'll be on hand to support you during the transition. Your child's Tapestry records will be securely archived, and we'll provide instructions on how to download a copy for your own keepsake if you'd like.

We're excited about this new chapter and are confident that POGO Progress will help us strengthen the home–nursery partnership even further. Thank you for your continued support — and as always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



PARENT PARTNERSHIP

Nursery News: Keeping Our Little Ones Safe and Comfortable

As the seasons change, we want to remind families of a few important things to help keep children safe, comfortable, and happy while they're with us:



Weather-Appropriate Clothing

Please make sure your child comes in with clothing suited to the day's weather. Coats, hats, gloves, and waterproofs help us enjoy outdoor play in all conditions.



Spare Clothes

Each child should have a bag with a few spare clothes inside. Please update these with seasonal items (e.g., warmer layers in the colder months, lighter clothing in summer).



Labelling Clothing

With so many children and lots of similar items, it's very easy for coats, jumpers, and hats to get mixed up. Please label all items clearly with your child's name—this helps us keep belongings safe and ensures nothing goes home with the wrong child.



Extra Clean Clothes & Allergies

We ask that children have plenty of clean spare clothes in their bag. This is especially important for avoiding cross-contamination. For example, if a child spills milk, having a full change of clean clothes ensures the safety of children with severe allergies.



Allergy Awareness – What Not to Bring

To keep all children safe, please do not bring in:

Nuts in any form (whole, chopped, spreads, etc.)

Pesto (often contains nuts)

Chocolate (can contain traces of nuts)

Your support helps us keep the nursery a safe, inclusive, and happy environment for everyone. Thank you for working with us to care for all of our little ones



POTTY TRAINING

To support you and your child on this journey, we've put together some helpful information and tips. These points are based on guidance from a trusted source (<https://eric.org.uk/potty-training/>).

We're here to help and happy to support you and your child every step of the way.

When Should You Start Potty Training?

- Potty training is a learning process, not a one-time event.
- Children need time, practice, and repetition — just like when learning to walk, talk, or use a spoon.
- You can begin introducing the potty before your child stops using nappies to help them build confidence.
 - Treat potty training like any other skill: start early and support their progress.

✗ Do You Need to Wait for 'Signs of Readiness'?

- No — most children (especially those with additional needs) won't show obvious signs that they're ready.
 - Most children won't suddenly decide they no longer want to wear nappies.
 - Waiting for readiness can delay the process unnecessarily.
 - Instead, focus on teaching the skills needed for success, step by step.

🕒 What Is the Best Age to Start?

- Most children are ready to begin learning around 18 months.
- Research shows that it's better for your child's bladder and bowel health to stop using nappies between 18 and 30 months.
- The longer you wait, the harder it can be for your child to adjust to life without nappies.
- In our experience, many young children are happy to sit on the potty or toilet at first.
- However, if potty training is delayed for too long, some children may become anxious and start refusing to sit.
- For this reason, we encourage moving your child into pants no later than 2 years and 6 months, to support a more confident and smooth transition.

Looking for More Information? <https://eric.org.uk/potty-training/>



WHAT WE GOT UP TO THIS SUMMER





STAFF SHOUT OUTS

Staff Shout Outs – Get Involved!

As we move away from monthly newsletters, we'll also be saying goodbye to our "Employee of the Month" feature. Instead, we're excited to introduce Staff Shout Outs — a new way to celebrate the fantastic work our team does every day!

We'd love for parents and carers to get involved! If there's a member of staff you think deserves a special mention, simply fill out one of the Shout Out forms available at reception. Whether it's a kind gesture, extra support, or a moment that made your child's day, we want to hear about it!

Let's celebrate the little things that make a big difference.

This time, we're starting with **staff-to-staff shout outs**. It's a lovely way for team members to show appreciation for one another and highlight the support, kindness, and teamwork that happen behind the scenes.



Shout out to Emily for always being willing to give support and advice to staff and helping support the set up for Tiny Acorns!



Shout out to Elli for her hard work in setting up Tiny Acorns. The room is beautiful and she has put her heart into making it a wonderful space for the children



Shout out to Sophie for stepping up to organise the team over at OOSC with encouragement and respect



Shout out to Dakota for taking charge with a room change whilst her room leader was off! She worked really hard and the room looks amazing!



Shout Out to Hollie for always being on the ball and encouraging high standards and exemplary practise in all staff



Shout out to Emily for always coming up with lovely activities to extend the children's learning and gauge their interest