

# UNDER THE OAK TREE

acorn half termly newsletter

MAY SUNSHINE AND SMILES EDITION

## MESSAGE FROM LORNA

It has been a relatively short half term this month; however, it has been a wonderful one filled with lots of learning, play, and fun. As we move into the final term before the summer holidays, I would like to wish all those leaving us for school this year the very best of luck. We will be making the most of our time together before your next exciting chapter begins.

As the weather becomes warmer, please remember to send your child in with sun cream and a hat. We are very lucky at Acorn to have air conditioning to help keep everyone comfortable during the hotter days.

Warm regards,

Lorna



## DATES FOR THE DIARY

Stay and plays  
Father's day - Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June

Photography visits  
Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November

Preschool graduation  
Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June

End of term  
Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July

End of stretched funding  
Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August at 12pm

## A VERY SAD GOODBYE

This term we say goodbye to our wonderful Deputy Manager, Hollie. ♥

Hollie has been with Acorn for over 7 years and during that time has worked her way from Room Leader, to 3-5 Building Lead, and most recently Deputy Manager. Throughout her journey she has shown endless dedication, passion, and care for both the children and the team.

Hollie will now be taking the next exciting step in her career as she becomes a nursery Manager.

Whilst we are all absolutely gutted to see her go – not only as our Deputy Manager, but also as a friend – we are incredibly proud of everything she has achieved. We know she will absolutely rock her new role and give it her all, just as she has done here every single day.

Thank you for everything, Hollie. We will miss you hugely and wish you all the very best for this exciting new chapter. ✨





# LITTLE ACORNS



What a wonderful and busy term we have had in the Little Acorns Room! The children have enjoyed a variety of exciting sensory experiences, creative activities, and opportunities to explore the world around them through play. From our citrus water play and safari-themed trays to sensory tiles and messy play, the babies loved discovering new textures, colours, and smells through hands-on learning.

The children especially enjoyed exploring car ramps and ball runs, learning about movement and cause and effect while having lots of fun. With the warmer weather arriving, we also spent plenty of time outdoors exploring the garden, enjoying nature, and watching planes flying in the sky. Soft play sessions supported the children's physical development as they climbed, crawled, balanced, and built confidence through active play.

During National Smile Month, we learned about the importance of brushing our teeth and keeping them healthy. Music time, painting activities, and simple baking experiences also brought lots of smiles as the children explored sounds, colours, textures, and ingredients together.

It has been lovely to see the children developing caring and nurturing skills by looking after the baby dolls, feeding them bottles, and putting them to sleep. We have also loved welcoming new friends into Little Acorns and watching the children begin to build positive relationships and friendships with one another. We are so proud of all our little Acorns and cannot wait for more exciting adventures next term! 🌟💖





# TINY ACORNS



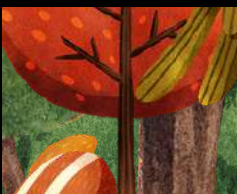
This term in Tiny Acorns we have been very busy exploring exciting activities to support the children's development through play. The babies have particularly enjoyed gross motor activities, including using the bikes outdoors, climbing on soft play equipment, and building confidence through balancing, crawling, and climbing. These experiences have supported coordination, balance, physical strength, and independence.

Music continues to be a big part of our daily routine. The babies have loved singing songs, joining in with action rhymes, and exploring musical instruments and resources. These activities help to develop communication and language skills through listening, turn-taking, and vocalisation. We have also introduced our new "What's in the Bag?" activity, where the children use their listening skills to explore hidden objects. The babies have shown great curiosity and excitement during this activity.

Our messy play experiences have been a huge success, with the babies enjoying spaghetti, rice, and water play. These sensory activities encourage the children to explore different textures while developing fine and gross motor skills through scooping, pouring, splashing, squeezing, and grasping.

Looking ahead to next term, we are excited to make the most of the warmer weather by spending more time outdoors. The babies will enjoy outdoor sensory play, physical activities, and nature walks to encourage curiosity and exploration. We are also very excited to welcome some new friends into the baby room – caterpillars! The children will observe the caterpillars as they grow and change, helping to develop an early understanding of the natural world. Alongside this, we will be exploring activities linked to the World Cup, including ball games, football-themed crafts, and fun team celebrations.

It has been wonderful to watch the babies grow in confidence, curiosity, and independence as they continue to learn through play every day.





# SUPER SEEDLINGS



This past term, we have been enjoying the lovely weather and spending lots of time outdoors. The children especially loved the water play activities in the garden, where they had fun splashing and exploring together.

We have also been busy with imaginative role play, pretending to buy and sell ice creams in the garden. During craft time, the children enjoyed making their very own ice cream creations. We are excited to share that we now have a brand-new ice cream parlour for the garden, and we cannot wait to explore and play with it next term.

We celebrated several birthdays this term too. The children enjoyed singing "Happy Birthday" to their friends and then continued the celebrations by playing with birthday cakes in the home corner.

The children have also been developing their gross motor skills by riding different bikes along the bike track. Some children even remembered to use the stop sign while riding, showing great awareness and confidence during play.

We are so proud of all the fun learning and development that has taken place this term and look forward to even more exciting activities next term.





# MIGHTY OAKS



This term has been a busy and fun-filled term in Mighty Oaks!

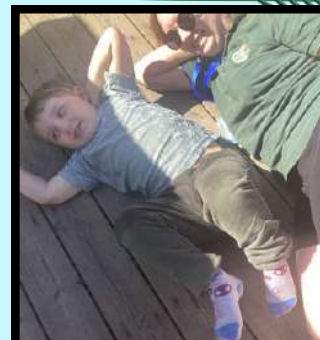
This month we have been focusing on school readiness for our older children. With the children finding out which schools they will be attending in September, school readiness activities have really kicked in. We have been encouraging the children to practise writing their own names, dressing up in school uniforms in our role play area, and talking about what their uniforms might look like when they start school.

April was National Smile Month, so we have been learning all about our teeth and how to keep them clean and healthy. The children have enjoyed taking part in activities about brushing their teeth and learning which foods are good for our teeth and which foods are less healthy.

The children are still showing a huge interest in messy play. From slime and playdough to jelly and cloud dough, they have loved exploring all the different textures | incorporating their favourite toys and interests into the activities.

Spring has officially begun and we have fully embraced it in Mighty Oaks. We have enjoyed talking about the animals we might see during springtime, decorating our own flowers to display on our walls, and taking part in lots of other spring-themed activities. We also celebrated National Bee Day together.

We are looking forward to spending the final term together as a group and making lots more happy memories before some of our friends head off to school.





# GREAT OAKS



What a busy and exciting time we have had in Great Oaks!

We celebrated Earth Day by learning how to care for our world. The children enjoyed a water tray filled with sea animals and "rubbish," using tweezers to carefully remove the litter from the water. This activity supported fine motor development and hand-eye coordination. We also spent time outdoors listening to the different sounds around us, including birds, cars, the wind, and motorbikes, helping to develop listening skills and curiosity about the natural world.

For St George's Day, the children made their own shields and flags and explored a sensory tuff tray with coloured rice in the shape of the flag. These activities encouraged creativity, imaginative play, and conversations about celebrations and traditions.

We have continued to focus on early phonics and communication through sound games, picture cards, and name-writing opportunities. The children are becoming more confident in recognising sounds and meaningful marks, supporting early literacy skills.

As school gets closer, we have been encouraging independence in everyday tasks. The children have been buttering their own crackers and practising using a knife and fork at lunchtime. We have also added school uniforms to our dressing-up area, and the children have loved pretending to get ready for school, helping them feel confident about the transition.

The children especially enjoyed sensory water play with lemons and limes, exploring different smells, tastes, and textures using their senses. During circle times, we have been learning ring games and songs, helping to build confidence, listening skills, and turn-taking.

Our Wellbeing Wednesdays continue to be a big success. Activities have included sound baths, a role-play vets area, colour monsters to talk about feelings, musical instruments, happy cloud activities, and using playdough to express emotions. These experiences support the children's personal, social, and emotional development as they learn to recognise and talk about their feelings, build friendships, and develop empathy.

We have also been busy practising our graduation songs and are very much looking forward to celebrating this special occasion with you all soon!





# A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PANCO

physical activity and nutritional co-ordinator

## National Smile Month - Celebrating 50 Years

**Children's Toothbrushing Routine and Brushing Charts**

**Community Dental Services**

**Toothbrushing charts**  
Toothbrushing charts can be an excellent way of helping your child develop and maintain their oral hygiene routine. They can help to make brushing fun and also highlight times when toothbrushing has been missed.

**Top tips for Toothbrushing**

- Brush for 2 minutes.
- Brush twice per day - before bed is the most important time!
- Spit, don't rinse out.
- Use a fluoride toothpaste.

Reward good toothbrushing with a fun family activity instead of sweets or chocolate.

**Smile Month**  
10th June - 10th July 2023

50 Years Celebrating Smiles!

©Community Dental Services CIC, 2023

This year marks 50 years since the Oral Health Foundation launched National Smile Month – a campaign dedicated to promoting good oral health habits for everyone.

During this year's campaign, Community Dental Services will be raising awareness of oral health across all stages of life, from pregnancy through to older adulthood.

Here at Acorn, we support good oral health by educating and encouraging parents to help children develop healthy dental habits from an early age. Looking after children's teeth is important because good oral health helps prevent tooth decay, pain, and infection, while also supporting overall health and wellbeing.

For more information about National Smile Month and advice on maintaining healthy teeth and gums, please visit:

## Dental Health - National Smile Month



**Children Healthy Snack Swaps**

**Community Dental Services**

Many snacks aimed towards children may contain hidden sugars.

Keep Sugar To Meal Times Only!

SCAN ME

touch box ideas

**Smile Month**  
10th June - 10th July 2023

**SWAP THIS**

- Originals Coby Bars
- Originals Coby Bars
- Originals Coby Bars

**FOR THIS**

- Fruit and berries
- Yoghurt and fruit
- Milk and water

For a snack to be classed as 'low sugar' you are looking for 5g or less of sugar per 100g.

50 Years Celebrating Smiles!

©Community Dental Services CIC, 2023





# A MESSAGE FROM YOUR H&S OFFICER

## Important product recall notice

We would like to make families aware of a recent product recall due to a potential risk of asbestos contamination.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring material that can pose health risks if its fibres are inhaled over prolonged periods or at elevated levels. The recall has been issued as a precautionary measure after concerns were identified regarding the presence of asbestos in certain batches of the product.

If you have purchased or used any of the products listed, we encourage you to:

- Stop using the product immediately
- Check product details, batch numbers, or manufacturing information against the recall notice
- Follow the manufacturer's guidance regarding returns, refunds, or disposal
- Contact your healthcare provider if you have concerns about exposure or any health-related questions

At this stage, the recall is intended to ensure safety and reduce any potential risk. We understand that product recalls can cause concern, and we encourage families to refer to official information sources for the most up-to-date guidance.

Further information can be found through the manufacturers website or the relevant product safety authority. For the current asbestos-related recall issue affecting children's products, there have been more than 100 recalled products (with reports citing around 127 products in the recent wave), mostly involving toys and craft items containing sand or sand-filled materials.

Examples of affected categories and products include:

- Children's sand art kits
- Craft activity boxes
- Excavation / archaeology dig kits
- Stretchy sand-filled toys
- Sensory craft products
- Candle-making kits containing sand
- Some branded character craft sets

Examples specifically named in recall notices:

- Hobbycraft Giant Box of Craft
- ORB Funkee sand-filled toys
- HTI Toys Stretcherz / Slammerz toys
- Crayola Discovery Craft Box and Sensory/Touchy Feely Craft Box
- Smyths Toys excavation/dig products
- Grafix "Make Your Own Sand Bottle" kits sold through retailers including Asda

For an up-to-date official list:

[UK Product Safety Alerts, Reports and Recalls \(GOV.UK\)](https://www.gov.uk/product-safety-alerts-reports-and-recalls)

You can search for "asbestos" there and see the full current recall notices with product names, model numbers, barcodes and images.

**PRODUCT  
RECALL**



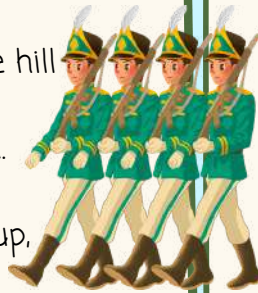
# ELKLAN

speech and language



## NURSERY RHYME (SONG)

Oh, the grand old Duke of York,  
He had ten thousand men,  
He marched them up to the top of the hill  
And he marched them down again.  
And when they were up, they were up,  
And when they were down, they were down,  
And when they were only halfway up,  
They were neither up nor down.



## SPEECH AND LANGUAGE TIP

Talking and listening skills grow best through everyday play and conversation. Try to spend a few minutes each day chatting with your child about what they are doing or seeing. Use short, simple sentences and give your child time to respond. Repeating and extending what your child says can also help build language skills.

For example:

Child: "Ice cream!"

Adult: "Yes, a big pink ice cream!"

Simple conversations like these help children learn new words and build confidence in communicating.

## ELKLAN UPDATE

### SECRET READER



As part of our communication and language focus through Elkkan, we are excited to introduce our new Secret Reader initiative!

Each month, we will invite a special visitor into nursery to share a story with the children. The "Secret Reader" could be a parent, grandparent, family member, or carer. Alongside reading a favourite story, visitors are also welcome to talk a little about their job, hobby, or role in the community to help children learn about different occupations and people who help us.

The identity of the Secret Reader will be kept a surprise until they arrive, making it a fun and exciting experience for the children!

If you would like to take part, please contact Maria via Tapestry or email. We would love to welcome you into nursery.





# HEALTHY RECIPE

mini mushroom & spinach pies



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 sheet of puff pastry
- 4-5 mushrooms - finely chopped
- 1 handful of spinach, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp plain flour
- 75ml milk
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 egg - beaten



Makes 6

**THIS RECIPE WAS SHARED BY ONE  
OF OUR BABY ROOM PARENTS  
WHO IS A DIETICIAN 😊**

## DIRECTIONS

- Cook mushrooms in butter until softened. Add spinach and stir until wilted.
- Add garlic powder and thyme, then sprinkle in the flour and stir to combine
- Gradually add the milk, stirring until you have a thick, creamy sauce. You may not need it all - you want the filling thick, not saucy or it'll leak!
- Roll out your puff pastry and cut an even number of discs using a cookie cutter
- Add a teaspoon of filling to the centre of half the discs. Top with the remaining discs and seal the edges firmly with a fork
- Brush with beaten egg and bake at 180 degrees for 12-15 minutes until golden.

**DONT FORGET TO SHARE PHOTOS ON  
TAPESTRY IF YOU MAKE THIS RECIPE!**



# PARENT PARTNERSHIP

updates and important information

## LUNCHBOXES & CHOKING

As part of our commitment to keeping all children safe during mealtimes, we kindly ask parents and carers to avoid sending foods that may present a choking risk in lunchboxes or snacks.

Recently, we have had to return some food items home, including popcorn and other foods identified as choking hazards for young children. We understand these foods may be enjoyed safely at home under close supervision, however within a nursery environment we must follow current food safety guidance to help reduce risk for all children.

Examples of foods that may pose a choking hazard include:

- Popcorn
- Whole grapes or cherry tomatoes
- Whole nuts
- Hard sweets or marshmallows
- Large chunks of raw fruit or vegetables

We follow guidance from the and NHS recommendations regarding safe food preparation for young children. Foods should be prepared appropriately – for example, grapes and cherry tomatoes should be cut lengthways into quarters.

Thank you for your understanding and support in helping us maintain a safe eating environment for all children. For more information please use the following link: <https://www.food.gov.uk/document/early-years-food-choking-hazards>

### Daily walk challenge

Support your child's speech and language development by taking part in our Daily Walk Challenge! 

Use the poster to spot, find, and talk about different things together during your walk – chatting about what you see is a great way to build vocabulary and communication skills. You can collect a copy from the Acorn reception.

Have fun 😊

### Daily walk challenge



ELLEBELLE DESIGN



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# STAFF SHOUT OUT'S

from parents and fellow staff



JULIJA

I heard the way you were communicating and interacting with your small group of children and thought it was really lovely!



DONNA & EMILY

Always fighting tirelessly for their children with SEND – attending meetings, challenging decisions, and making sure their needs and voices are understood – while also supporting the staff who care for and work with their children every day, helping them better understand each child's needs, sharing strategies that work, and working together to create a more supportive, inclusive environment where every child can thrive



KATIE

Katie always has a sunny mood



LORNA

For always supporting the students who complete their placement at Acorn



HYDIE

She has been an incredible support in settling our daughter into Little Acorns. She is such a kind, caring and thoughtful key worker and it has made the transition so much easier for us because our daughter clearly adores her. Thanks for going above and beyond!

