



Gracelands  
Nursery School

AUTUMN 2 - 2025

# NEWSLETTER

## Sowing the seeds for lifelong learning

### Dates for your diary

#### DECEMBER

19th - Break up for Christmas holiday  
WB 22nd - SCHOOL HOLIDAY (2 weeks)

#### JANUARY

5th - Back to nursery (Spring 1)  
15th - Reception place application deadline  
19th - NDP Team (Neurodevelopmental Pathway) Team coffee morning held at Jakeman Nursery 9am-10:30am  
27th - SEND coffee morning with SENCO & Pod (Communication Autism Team) @Gracelands

#### FEBRUARY

6th - NSPCC Number Day and maths parent workshop (actual day = 7th)  
10th - Safer Internet Day  
13th - Break up for the half term holiday  
WB 16th - SCHOOL HOLIDAY (1 week)  
23rd - Back to nursery (spring 2)

#### MARCH

4th - World Book Day (book character dress) (actual day = 5th)  
20th - World Down Syndrome Day (wear different socks to nursery)  
25th - Ramadan, Eid & Easter family activity session  
27th - Break up for Easter holiday  
Date TBC - local walk to the church  
WB 30th - SCHOOL HOLIDAY (2 weeks)

#### APRIL

13th - Back to nursery (Summer 1)  
15th - Early writing 'learn together' parent workshop

#### MAY

4th - Bank holiday (nursery closed)

### Head Teacher's message



Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your continued support this term and for all the Christmas well wishes we've received.

School applications: Very important reminder... Action is required for children who will be 4 by 31st August 2026 and going to school in September 2026. See page 3 for more details. This online application must be done by the deadline on 15th January for your child to receive a Reception school place on the offer day in April.

Recent training day: On Monday 1st December, the staff team at Gracelands all participated in 'Trauma Informed Attachment Aware Schools' (TIASS) training. For the second part of the day, we learnt about and practiced emotion coaching strategies. We'll be sharing some of this content with parents soon, look out for information on a meeting date in the new year.

Brilliant Brushers launch and toothbrushes given out to children: As part of the Brilliant Brushers programme, in collaboration with Colgate, all children have now received Colgate toothpaste and toothbrush. Let us know if you don't have one. Children are learning the skill of dry brushing their teeth in nursery and practicing at nursery once a week; they are still required to brush their teeth (supervised) twice a day at home. We hope they can show you the good brushing skills they've been learning!

Social media: Follow us on Instagram and/or Facebook by scanning these QR codes on another device →

Finally, as we enter a school holiday, let us remember that the new years brings a fresh start, filled with new opportunities and hope - look after yourselves and have a joyful break.

Sam

FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM



WE ARE A UNICEF GOLD  
RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL

Children's rights are learned, understood  
and lived in this school.



**Executive Head Teacher:** Sam Richards

**Deputy Head Teacher:** Harshila Parmar

**SENCO:** Gail Goldberg

**Teacher:** Sophie Cameron

**Office Admin Assistant:** Abdi Omer

**Nursery Practitioners:** Salma Mushtaq, Sughra Sattar, Sonia Parvaz, Rifat Shaheen, Zaryab Mahmood (mat leave), Ammara Usman, Mevish Rehmat & Ayah Masood

### Contact Us

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'Gracelands Local Authority  
Maintained Nursery School'

## AUTUMN CURRICULUM FOCUS

# LEARNING

This half term, we have immersed ourselves in a range of enriched learning opportunities, developing our knowledge and skills and fostering a love of learning. We have developed our understanding of the world through core books, such as 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' 'Stickman' and 'Dear Zoo'. Children explored different geographical locations and developed their emotional literacy when talking about the characters, as well as naming animals and expanding their vocabulary. Through our text 'The Proudest Blue', the children spoke confidently about their own families and what makes them feel proud.

During healthy eating week, we enjoyed making a fruit salad and referenced our Start-well character 'Faye 5 a day', who encourages us to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Children in little nursery have enjoyed food play and preparing their own fruits and vegetables. Continuing our conversations around health, we looked deeper into oral hygiene using our core text 'Why we go to the Dentist'. The children have been successfully practicing brushing their teeth, with Smiley Shen supporting us along the way.

In the changing seasons, we have enjoyed all weather types and developed our understanding of natural phenomena such as melting ice and fallen leaves. We have explored key events such as Bonfire Night (learning about fire safety), Remembrance Day, World Children's Day and Children in Need.

Developing our creativity, children have discovered new ideas linked to our Jazz music focus and artist inspiration study on 'Wassily Kandinsky'.

Through embedded phonics learning, we have been exploring environmental sounds and body percussion, further developing our listening and attention skills. In Road Safety Week, we learned the 'stop, look and listen' rule and applied these skills on our exciting visit to Birmingham Library and the Christmas markets. Thank you to all of the families that were able to attend.

During our Christmas learning, the children have engaged in arts and crafts with their families and expanded their knowledge of different religious and cultural traditions, learning new songs and exploring 'The Nativity' story. Our elf in little and big nursery has enabled children to further consider their rights as they have been teaching the elf about our right to safety, health and a safe environment. →

## ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

2025-26 year to date	
	Attendance %
Big nursery	81%
Little nursery	86.5%
All	84.5%
Attendance this half term	
	Attendance %
Big nursery	85%
Little nursery	76%
All	82%

It's been a great start to the year for attendance.

Please take the time to read our attendance policy and support approach, this can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/4jrnpwxr>

We want every child to access as much of their education entitlement as possible.

Our aspiration is to reach 90% attendance this year.

It can be tricky, especially at this time of year, to know when to keep your child off school when they have signs of winter colds. Hopefully the NHS guidance 'Too Ill For School?' below will help.

RRSA links:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child links =

**Article 3:** best interests of the child

**Article 28:** right to an education

## ATTENDANCE MATTERS



*If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone us on the first day. Let us know that your child won't be in, giving the reason. If the phone is engaged, please leave a message.*

Our Counting Collections sessions and wider learning has enabled children to further develop their number knowledge and apply these skills within their play. Well done Nursery, for a fantastic half term of fun, love and learning. We look forward to celebrating key events with you in the new year.

## NEXT HALF TERM

In the new year, the spring term will begin with welcoming our new families joining us. The children will explore a variety of texts with the first being Goldilocks and the Three Bears in big nursery and 5 Little Ducks in little nursery. Props and acting will bring the texts to life, promote storytelling and further support key vocabulary. As part of our growth project and sustainable living commitment, we will be working with the children to begin the spring planting. This will include flowers (to promote visiting insects), and fruit and vegetables.





# STARTWELL

Startwell have shared their '12 days of Christmas' activities for families to take part in over the festive period.

The full ideas list can be found on the final page of this newsletter, and also here:

[12 Days of Christmas Startwell Challenge - Startwell 2020](#)

Coming up soon...

**23rd – 25th January: Big Garden Birdwatch**

Organised by the RSPB, the Big Garden Birdwatch is a great opportunity to explore nature with the children. Big Garden Birdwatch is the world's largest garden wildlife survey. Every year, hundreds of thousands of nature lovers take part, helping to build a picture of how garden birds are faring.

Why not take a wildlife bird watch walk with Active Azra to see how many birds and what different types you can spot? You could extend this by making bird feeders or reading stories or non-fiction books about birds.

To find out more and see how you can take part, visit:

[Big Garden Birdwatch](#)



Look at the Startwell website for more tips and advice:

<https://startwellbirmingham.co.uk/>

## FLU VACCINATIONS



Protecting your child against flu;  
Information for parents and carers  
[Children's flu vaccine - NHS](#)

On 1 September 2025, the annual flu vaccination programme for preschool children launched. All children aged 2 and 3 years old (on 31 August 2025) are eligible for a...

Flu vaccine is offered free to:

Children aged 2 or 3 years old (on 31 August before flu vaccinations start in the autumn)



School-aged children (Reception to Year 11)

Children from 6 months of age with a health condition that puts them at greater risk from flu



Further information on which children are eligible each year can be found at: [www.nhs.uk/child-flu](http://www.nhs.uk/child-flu)

...free flu vaccination in the form of a quick and painless nasal spray. Preschool children can get the flu vaccine at their GP surgery, and some participating community pharmacies.

Children who can't have the nasal spray for medical or faith reasons can request an alternative flu vaccine that is given as an injection instead, which does not contain any porcine gelatine.

## 5 reasons to get your child vaccinated

### 1. Protect your child

The vaccine will help protect your child against flu and serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia

### 2. Protect you, your family and friends

Vaccinating your child will help protect more vulnerable friends and family

### 3. No injection needed

The nasal spray is painless and easy to have

### 4. It's better than having flu

The nasal spray helps protect against flu, has been given to millions of children worldwide and has an excellent safety record

### 5. Avoid costs

If your child gets flu, you may have to take time off work or arrange alternative childcare

## SAFEGUARDING UPDATE FOR FAMILIES

The following website shares very important information and tips on keeping children safe.



### 6 simple safety tips to keep children safe this Christmas

Let's keep it merry with six simple safety tips you can do that won't add to the to-do list: [Keep children safe this Christmas | 6 simple safety tips](#)



## SCHOOL RECEPTION PLACE APPLICATIONS



Apply online for your child to start Reception class in September 2026

For those of you whose child turned/turns 4 on or before August 31st 2026, your child is due to start Reception in September. Every child requires an application for this move to school.

Please let us know ASAP if you need any help with logging in or completing the online application.

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions)

**Deadline for completion of the application is: 15th January 2026**

**School place offer date is 16th April 2026**

Any late applications (submitted after 15th January) will not be processed until after this offer date.





If you don't yet follow us on **INSTAGRAM**, please do!  
Harshila, Sam and Sophie enjoy posting photos and videos to share what we get up to each week!









Sowing the seeds for lifelong learning



# Startwell's

## 12 Days of Christmas



Suzy Startwell wants everyone to pick and play their favourite Christmas song and role model high energy dancing to all the children.



Smiley Shen wants you to create a snowy picture using toothpaste and a toothbrush on coloured card, a snowman would be good. Coloured toothpaste could also be used to colour some cut out bauble baubles.



Active Azra wants you to help Santa deliver his presents, but first Santa needs to find them. Place Christmas objects around the room / garden and call them out for the children to find.



Micky Me Size wants you to draw around your hand in a circle so that you know the size of your plate. Now draw around your fingers and turn your hand into a reindeer giving it a red nose and two eyes – check out our Winter Pinterest board to see how!



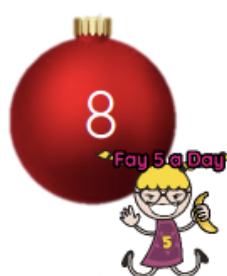
180 Katies wants you to play the Startwell 180 Katie song which is perfect for this time of year as it has a Christmas tune. (This can be found on the Startwell website). Learn the words and dance along!



2 Snacks Max wants you to create an edible Christmas bauble. Spread cream cheese on top of rice cakes and decorate with chopped up fruit and vegetables to look like a bauble. Remember food safety to avoid choking. Enjoy!



Sammy Skills wants you to practice your throwing and aiming with 'Snowball Target Practice' – scrunch up some paper to make a snowball, aim and throw them at a Christmas target.



Fay 5 a day wants you to use Christmas shaped cutters for your snack. Try using a Christmas tree shape with watermelon and a star shape with melon or pineapple. Remember food safety to avoid choking.



Active Azra wants you to go on a reindeer hunt with her. The cheeky reindeers are hiding round the setting/garden and need to be brought back to pull Santa's sleigh. Can you find them? Remember to gallop like reindeers.



Micky Me Size wants to help children leave the right amount of food when Santa comes to visit. Get a big bowl for Santa, 7 medium bowls for his reindeers and small bowls for his elves! Use carrots to see how much each of them should be eating!



180 Katies wants you to play Christmas relay races. Can you use a Christmas teddy as the relay baton to pass to your friends to run and pass it on. Make your heart go Boom. Boom, Boom.



Fay 5 a day wants you to serve fruits and vegetables in a Christmas arrangement-e.g. Christmas tree, stocking or nowman. Alternatively make a Christmas picture using seasonal vegetable peelings such as carrot, parsnip, sprouts and cabbage. Remember food safety to avoid choking.