



## Our Yoga sessions

Lisa, our Acorns room leader has been practising Yoga for 20 years. When we returned to nursery after COVID lockdown she became acutely aware of the effect it had had on the children, as well as the parents. She decided to start some simple yoga practices with the children. She was unsure how the children would react to sitting still and responding to instructions to try different asanas (poses). They have loved it!

We carry out short sessions, often linking to things we've been doing during the week. Lots of the yoga poses have names of the animals and plants that the children are familiar with, and we often use pictures to help demonstrate each pose. This helps with extending both thought processes and language, by making connections between 2D images to make a 3D shape. The children definitely have their favourites: downward dog, cat, cow and even a few boats!

We always begin in a traditional way, sitting on the carpet, hands together, saying 'namaste', the meaning of which is 'I and you', and represents respect for yourself and for others, which is part of the nursery's ethos. Sometimes we take part in mindfulness, closing our eyes and listening to our surroundings, taking time to be in the present. If the children are a little overexcited, we start with some wriggling and shaking of arms and legs, then get them to stop, sit, and put their hands on their chests to listen to their breathing, and feel their hearts beating- it works, believe me! They calm and connect with their bodies, and we continue to have a nice little yoga session on the carpet. The children who have been doing yoga for a while often suggest poses they'd like to do at the end, giving them a chance to express themselves which is a really important part of our ethos. We feel very proud to be able to offer this opportunity to our Acorns and Preschool children and the benefits yoga has for their health and wellbeing.

