



The Ark Newsletter

January 2026

Staff News

Unfortunately Sue our after school and holiday club leader has decided to retire after working at the Ark/Raft for over 11years .Sue will be leaving at the end of February to enjoy a holiday in Australia to visit her son and grandchildren.

Children's Activities

This term we have been encouraging new children to settle into and explore their new environment, to make relationships with their key worker and other children. Our youngest children are developing so many new skills, sitting upright, cruising round furniture, walking independently, taking off their own shoes and socks and washing their hands. Their personalities are changing too, and we have had so much delight in watching them grow in confidence and sharing in their smiles and laughter each day. We continue to love books and rhymes and the children independently choose their favourite puppet from the song bag, indicating which rhyme they'd like to sing. They sit beautifully for stories and join in with the ones they know well.

The toddler room encourages and supports children to get to know routines and expectations within the room such as where things are kept, to put toys away safely and to play in a safe environment. It enables children to join in and play with each other and their key person where they can explore both indoors and outdoors in all weathers! The toddler room gives children the opportunity to become independent in personal care such as dressing/undressing, feeding/drinking, toileting and handwashing.

Preschool have also been busy making bird feeders for their gardens at home. The children mixed together bird seed with lard covering pine cones with the mixture. The children made binoculars to watch the birds in our garden and at home as part of the RSPB bird watch programme.

The children across the nursery have been celebrating Chinese New Year with noodle play, making lanterns, Chinese symbol painting, exploring rice and setting up their own 'Chinese restaurant' in the role play area.

Over the past few weeks the children have been having lots of fun in the rain! They have been drawing with chalks on the wet ground and observing the colours mixing together, and then jumping in the colourful puddles! If you have not done so already please bring in some wellies for your child labelled with their name as we will continue this over the next few weeks! Please ensure children have enough spare clothes including socks.



If your personal details have changed recently e.g. new phone number or new address, please let us know as soon as possible. It is vital we hold up to date information for all contacts involving your child. In the event of an emergency, we must ensure we have the relevant contact numbers for an additional **two** emergency contacts for your child/ren. Children who become unwell whilst attending nursery should be collected in a **timely** manner.

We are very keen to promote independence in our children and we would be grateful if your child could be dressed in clothes that allow them to access the toilets independently e.g. elasticated jogging bottoms. Please could you ensure that your child wears shoes which they can fasten themselves and that they can put their own coat on. We spend a lot of time outdoors, so a waterproof coat and a pair of wellies are essential. A clean change of clothing is also advisable for **all** children as accidents can happen. We have limited spare clothing.

Packed Lunch

For children who do not eat a hot nursery lunch, the option of bringing in a packed lunch is available. When choosing items for your child's lunch box please be mindful of our Safer eating and Nutrition Policy which requests that parents support us in our healthy eating aims when providing packed lunches. Food such as crisps, chocolate, sweets or fizzy drinks and squash should be avoided, as should any other foods with high levels of additives/colourings as some children are highly sensitive to these ingredients which can severely affect their behaviour and /or make them sick. Food with **nut** content should also be avoided as children with severe allergy to nuts can suffer extreme reactions even via indirect contact. Fruit or vegetable and dairy snacks are encouraged.

The Start of the Day

The Ark is open to children from 8.00am. Although some staff arrive before this time, we are unable to accept children before 8.00am as we may not have enough staff to meet legal ratios. Furthermore staff are fully occupied setting out the rooms and preparing for the day.

Arrival/Collection Times

Please ensure you leave and collect your child at the times booked, as several children have been arriving before their session begins and/or have been collected after their session ends. This is particularly prevalent before the 8.45am session and at the end of the 12.45 – 3.15pm session. If you do occasionally arrive early please wait with your child in the lobby until the start of the booked session. If you are also collecting older siblings from school at 3.15pm, please ensure you collect your child from The Ark first. This is very important as we may breach our OFSTED registration conditions if we do not adhere to correct staff/children ratios. Also as you are all aware as a setting we operate 8am-6pm. This means we close the doors at 6pm, if you require a handover at the end of your child's

session please arrive ten minutes early to allow staff to hand over to you as Afterschool club starts at 3:15pm.

Communication

If you are going to be late collecting your child, please call and let us know especially at the end of the day and can we ask that you let us know if your child is going to be late in for their session. Rooms often have trips out planned.

If someone other than you or the person who usually collects your child will be collecting, please let us know even if they are on the list of people allowed to collect, we still need to know.

If your child is booked in to After School Club and plans change and you are collecting your child please let us know.

This enables us to ensure the safety and welfare of all the children in our care and to alleviate any anxiety your child may have when plans change.

Fund raising

Thank you to all those parents who have supported our fund raising efforts. We now have a lovely new climbing frame which the children are thoroughly enjoying!



Parking – Please remember not to park on school grounds between 8.30am and 3.30pm.

Term Dates

Spring term 2026

Monday 5th January- Friday 27th March

Half-term and Holiday Club Monday 16th February –Friday 20th February

Inset/ Holiday club day Monday 23rd February

Easter Holiday and holiday club Monday 3rd March – Tuesday 14th April

Good Friday 3rd April – The Ark closed

Easter Monday 6th April – The Ark closed

Inset/ Holiday club day Monday 13th April.

Summer term 2026

Tuesday 14th April – Wednesday 22nd July

Half-term and Holiday Club Tuesday 26th May – Monday 1st June

If your child has a term time only booking they should not attend on inset/ holiday club days.

The Ark Summer closure week Monday 24th August-Friday 28th August 2026 inclusive

Sarah McNab

Nursery Manager