



The Ark Newsletter

February 2026

Staff Changes

Sue Murdock has retired from afterschool and holiday club. We are currently recruiting a replacement for this role. Whilst we are recruiting Shelly, Candice and Kerry will be covering the position.

Children's Activities

In the baby room, the children have been enjoying a wide range of sensory experiences. They have explored different textures through sensory play, including food play, sensory bags, and light-based activities. These experiences support curiosity and early exploration, allowing the children to use their senses to discover the world around them in a safe and engaging way. Stories have been shared regularly, with the children showing great interest in books, puppets, and story time sessions. Singing and rhyming activities have also been enjoyed, helping to support early communication and language development, listening skills, and bonding with familiar adults. The children have responded with smiles, movements, and vocal sounds as they join in.

In the toddler room, the children have been enjoying a variety of mark-making activities, exploring prints and patterns using different objects such as potatoes and other everyday resources. These activities encourage curiosity and creativity while supporting early hand-eye coordination and fine motor development. The children have shown great excitement as they explore how different objects create different marks.

We have also been extending the children's physical development through outdoor play. The children have been jumping, balancing, climbing, and building, which helps to strengthen their core muscles, coordination, and confidence. Outdoor learning provides valuable opportunities for children to take.

Alongside this, the children have been developing their problem-solving skills through hands-on activities. Threading, construction, and open-ended creative tasks have encouraged them to think, plan, and persevere when challenges arise. We have seen wonderful examples of children working things out independently, as well as collaborating with their peers, sharing ideas, and helping one another.

Tapestry – We do hope you are continuing to access your child's online Learning Journal on Tapestry and are finding it illuminating. Please do add your own comments, observations and photos from home to enhance two-way feedback.



Home/The Ark Liaison

You are welcome to speak informally to your children's key person at any time. Please feel free to talk to any other member of staff caring for your children as all information is shared. You are also welcome to make an appointment with his or her key person at a mutually convenient time if you prefer to do this.

It is also helpful to us and your children if you keep us informed of any changes in your children's home situation that may impact on them; for example, a house move, changes to family unit or bereavements.

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. If you arrive early please wait outside the Ark and Raft buildings until staff open the doors.

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.

Our nursery is accessed through a bolted gate.

May I remind all parents to ensure when you enter or exit the gate you slide the middle bolt across firmly to ensure the safety of all our children. If the children are out in the garden playing both bolts will be drawn across to prevent anyone entering, on these occasions you will need to wait for a member of staff on duty outside to let you in and the member of staff will ensure both bolts are replaced. A member of staff will let you back out.

When leaving our nursery buildings please remember to open the door yourself, we do not allow children to open this door themselves; this is a safeguarding precaution in place to ensure the safety of all our children.

Please do not let another person in with you even if you know them unless they have been seen by the member of staff opening the door.

A polite reminder, please do not use your mobile phone once inside the nursery gate the use of mobile phones is not permitted in the main nursery. Please refer to the Ark policies

Parking – Please remember not to park on school grounds between 8.30am and 3.30pm. The four parking spaces outside the Ark gate are for **staff** only.

Important dates for your diary:

World Book Day **Thursday 5th March** – children are invited to dress up as their favourite character from a book and bring a book in to share with their friends.

Parents Evening- **Thursday 19th March**

Easter Holiday club Monday 30th April – Tuesday 14th April

Preschool Graduation and family picnic **Saturday 4th July 11.00am-1.00pm**

Term Dates

Spring term 2026

Monday 5th January- Friday 27th March

Easter Holiday and holiday club Monday 30th 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

The Raft opening times are **8.00am-5.45pm** during both term time and for holiday club.

Sarah McNab

Nursery Manager