



The Ark Newsletter

April 2026

Staff

We have successfully recruited Laura to join the Raft team. Laura is a qualified primary school teacher and has experience with the older children. Laura will be starting in the Raft on Monday 18th May.

Lucy & Maddie are completing their Snowdon challenge on Saturday 1st May, we wish them the very best of luck. Please visit their just giving page, if you are able to support their fundraising efforts.

[The Ark is fundraising for The Ark Child Okeford](#)

Children's activities

The baby room has been full of exciting exploration and discovery. The children have been enjoying learning about colours through a range of messy and sensory play activities, including shaving foam and paint, which they have absolutely loved. These experiences help to support their sensory development, encourage curiosity, and build early fine motor skills. Singing and nursery rhymes have been a big hit, especially those featuring farm animals, alongside sharing lots of engaging stories together, helping to develop language, listening, and early communication skills. They have also spent plenty of time outdoors, where the children have had great fun exploring water and sand, supporting their physical development, coordination, and understanding of the world through hands-on play.



Role play has been a huge hit in the toddler room, allowing the children to use their imagination, develop social skills, and learn to cooperate with their peers. Cooking activities and story times have also been very special moments in the room, giving the

children opportunities to engage in language development, listening, and turn-taking, while enjoying and sharing stories together. Through all these experiences, the children are building confidence, curiosity, and essential skills that support their ongoing growth and love of learning.



In Preschool, the children have been focusing on developing their independence in a variety of ways, including putting on their own coats, self-serving at lunchtime, and helping to prepare their own snacks. These everyday tasks are supporting their confidence, self-care skills, and sense of responsibility. The children have also been exploring rhymes, sounds, and a wide range of stories, which have been brought to life through exciting and inviting tuff tray activities, helping to support their early literacy, imagination, and communication skills. They have also been making the most of the garden, enjoying building with a variety of equipment, going on bug hunts, and taking part in sensory play. These experiences encourage teamwork, problem-solving, physical development, and curiosity about the natural world.



Parents of young children are facing a constant battle with screens. Now, for the first time, the government is stepping in with clear, trusted guidance to help families navigate it.

For more information visit https://beststartinlife.gov.uk/screen-time_under-5s/

School Places

We hope all our children who will be starting school in September 2026 got the place they wanted. Please ensure you accept a place and have informed us of which school your child will be attending. We will continue to support them in being school ready and preparing them for their transition. Please also see the link for helping your child be school ready.

[Preparing for school - Best Start in Life](#)

A Few Reminders

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 the day please arrive by 5.50pm so that staff have time to do the handover. If you arrive after this time, handover will be short and limited. Any collections after 6pm may incur a fee.

Toys from home

We now request that you **Do Not** bring any toys into nursery, unfortunately they are causing arguments, getting broken and are taking staff time in finding them at the end of sessions. This will now include during the holiday time as well.

This will also help for preparation to school

Children can bring in a book to share with their peers however we will not be responsible for keeping it safe or sending it home.

Administrator

Just a polite reminder that Tracey our administrator works **Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 0830am-5pm**. We ask that if you would like to discuss ongoing bookings, payments or funding please email or pop in during Tracey's working hours. This way we will be able to help you more efficiently as other members of staff maybe included within the ratios for the children.

Information sharing

We would like to remind everyone of the importance of information sharing. It is so important we know about any changes to the children's home lives, sleep patterns, eating patterns, allergies or medical needs so we can best support them while they are at nursery. If they haven't had a good night's sleep, tell us. If they have started having medical investigations, tell us. Started long term meds (i.e. inhalers) tell us. Family members visiting, tell us and so on

All these things can affect a child's day with us so it's so important we know so we can continue to offer high levels of care and support. Everything is communicated confidentially and need-to-know basis. Our doors and phone lines are always open so don't hesitate to let us know, even the smallest thing.

The use of mobile phones within the gates of The Ark is prohibited.

As the weather is becoming slightly more like summer please remember to pack a named sun hat in your child's bag.

On days where UV is moderate/high please apply sun cream to your child before they attend we will apply a top up during the afternoon. If your child requires their own sun cream please provide us with a named bottle.

Children who have had Paracetamol or ibuprofen for illness should **not** be attending nursery. Children with a temperature should remain at home for at least 24 hours and until they can retain their temperature without the need for pain relief. This stops the spread of infection between children and staff!

Term Dates

Summer term 2026

Monday 13th 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.

Both the Ark and Raft buildings are closed for Bank Holidays

Thank you to the members of our local Women's Institute (WI) for judging our Easter decorated egg completion.



Dates for your Diary

We will also be hosting a stall at the **Heyday at Child Okeford Recreation Ground on Saturday 27th June**. Do you have an hour to spare to help run the stall? Any volunteers would be greatly appreciated - please speak to Sarah, Tash or a member of the Arks trustees. Please come and support us at these events.

Preschool Graduation Family Picnic (Bring your own Picnic) Saturday 4th July in

The Ark Garden 11.00am- 1.00pm. All families across the nursery are invited. The Ark will provide drinks and cake and we are asking for a donation of £5 per family to attend this event. We will also draw our summer raffle at this event- Tickets will be available

soon. Please let Sarah, Tash or Tracey know if you would like to attend.
If anyone has any donations of raffle prizes we would be extremely grateful

Fire assembly point

In the event of the fire alarm sounding when you are dropping off or collecting your children at The Ark please follow the staff's direction and evacuate through the nearest fire exit. The fire assembly point is on St Nicholas's school playground next to the outdoor classroom

Sarah McNab

Nursery Manager