

The Ark Child Okeford

Prospectus

We open from 8.00 until 6.00 for 50 weeks per year, closing for one week near the end of August and one week at Christmas.

We are a registered charity, with the legal status of a company limited by guarantee, which protects members from financial risk. At the Annual General Meeting every March, a committee of directors is elected to administer and be responsible for the policy of the group; we need all our parents to be involved and value your help with fund-raising events.

The Ark has an equal opportunities policy which means that we do not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, religion or gender, and we would expect parents to do likewise.

Our aims are

- To enhance the development and education of children in a parent-involving, community-based group.
- To offer good quality, affordable childcare.
- To provide a caring, safe, secure and stimulating environment for children from 0 years to the end of primary school age.
- To work within a framework that ensures equality of opportunity for all children and families.

We offer your child

- A specially tailored curriculum for each child.
- Individual care and attention made possible by a high ratio of qualified staff to children.
- Fun and friendship with children and adults.
- The support of a personal key worker.
- A record of his/her learning and development is kept on the innovative, interactive online learning journal 'Tapestry'. This enables us to record, track and celebrate his/her progress and keep you informed and involved in partnership via email link. It also allows for you to add photos and comments from home that he/she can share with us. Tapestry builds up a treasured memoir that he/she takes with them when they leave for the next stages of their journey through life.

The Baby & Toddler Rooms

Our Baby Room has room for up to six babies and children under two years. The Toddler Room has room for up to eight children from two to three years. The Baby and Toddler Rooms are designed to create a calm and homely atmosphere, and will complement home routines as much as possible.

As your baby gets older she/he will be introduced to a greater variety of experiences; planning and recording follows the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is a daily system of exchange of information between the parent and key person. This will be both verbal, and in the form of individual booklets containing information about the baby/child's routine - sleep times, food intake, nappy changes, activities and development.

Staff will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance, in order that all babies' and children's learning needs are met. Daily activities will consist of a lot of sensory play, both indoors and out. These will be carefully planned and be appropriate for the age and development of the babies/children. When possible, and with parents' written consent, staff will take the babies/children for outings around the village and to the park.

Our staffing levels will ensure that babies and children will interact at regular and frequent intervals with a familiar adult childcare worker throughout the day. Examples of activities to encourage imagination, communication and creativity are: mirrors, photographs, feathers, soft toys, puppets, dressing up, streamers, bubbles, windmills, pull-along toys, heuristic play materials, treasure baskets, pots and pans, cornflour, water, playdough, paint, pasta, sand, jelly, paste, sorting sets, colour matching toys, wooden blocks, music and musical instruments singing rhymes and songs, stories and books.

Cots, sleep mats and bedding are provided for babies and children to rest or sleep. Each baby or child will have his/her own bedding, kept in named, cotton drawstring bags. Bedding will be laundered by us. Sleeping babies are frequently checked. Babies will be held whilst bottle feeding, by the same carer, and feeding will follow each baby's individual needs. The nursery will provide beakers, bowls, plates, cutlery and bibs.

We ask you to bring in nappies, wipes and a change of clothes, bottles of milk, labelled with the baby's name. Meals can be provided for babies from weaning age in line with each baby's individual needs and with detailed consultation with parents.

Transition to the Toddler Room

We believe that children's emotional security is vitally important, and for this reason have created a doorway between the Baby and Toddler Rooms so that children get to know staff and children in both rooms. Children will be given the opportunity to play and socially interact in the Toddler Room, if it is appropriate for their individual development. Transitions take place slowly and naturally. When this transition is almost complete your child's new key worker will meet with you to introduce themselves and exchange relevant information about your child's individual needs with you.

Baby Room Fees as from 1st September 2019

£25.30 per morning	8.00 - 12.30
£24.10 per afternoon	1.30 - 6.00
£4.85 lunch session	12.30 - 1.30
£48.20 per full day	8.00 - 6.00

Bookings are year round for babies.

Pre-School Room

We are committed to meeting the individual needs of all children. The welfare of the children is central to our provision of care, learning and play. Individual care and attention is made possible by a high ratio of adults to children. All children are respected and valued and we provide experiences to support their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development in a warm, caring and secure environment.

Through carefully planned activities, play opportunities and interactions, staff promote children's self-esteem and support them in developing skills, knowledge and understanding as they explore their world. Children are encouraged and supported in making choices and decisions as active learners. Their progress is monitored regularly in order to ensure that individual needs are identified and provided for.

Our key worker system gives each member of staff particular responsibility for just a few children. Each child in the group has one special adult to relate to, which can make settling into the group very much easier. In addition, the key worker is in a position to tailor the group's curriculum to the unique needs of each child. The key worker maintains links with the child's home setting, working with parents through shared record-keeping to ensure that all children are supported in reaching their full potential.

Key workers make observations on children's interests, schemas, progress and achievements, recording these in the children's individual records. Observations are shared with parents and carers and we aim to work in partnership to provide the most appropriate care, learning and play for their children's development. This information is shared with other staff to ensure continuity of care and learning.

We offer the children a broad and balanced curriculum which follows the Early Years Foundation Stage. A wide variety of activities, both planned and free choice, provide opportunities to learn through play. Activities are varied and include a mixture of active and quiet times throughout the day, and the children have opportunities to participate in both indoor and outdoor activities. Individual children's communication skills in speaking and listening are promoted. Children are encouraged to look at books, and opportunities are sought to both read to, and with, children. Early mathematical skills are developed through everyday routines, as well as planned experiences and games. Activities which engage the children in problem-solving and investigation are provided. We stimulate the children's imaginative and creative development through a range of activities, including: role play; a variety of painting, modelling and drawing experiences, both planned and free-choice; singing and dancing to music, as well as listening to music and playing instruments.

Plans for children's daily activities are displayed on the Baby and Toddler Room doors and the Pre-School's are in the Pre-school Room on the wall.

Settling In

Starting at a nursery is a big step, both for children and for their families. A child who is tense or unhappy will not be able to play or learn properly, so it is important for parents and childcare staff to work together to help the child feel confident and secure in the group. This takes longer for some children than for others and parents should not feel worried if their child takes a while to settle.

These suggestions are intended to help you make it a successful and happy time:

Be prepared to stay with your child on the first day, and for as many sessions as necessary, until he/she is settled and happy to part from you. If your child has never attended a nursery before, please stay for a minimum of two sessions, on the third leave for an hour or so. Every child is different and we suggest you talk to the Manager and/or the appropriate Room Leader for individual advice.

Try to spend some time in the group if you can, or to attend open days/evenings, so that you know what goes on there. This will make it easier for you to talk to your child afterwards about what he/she has been doing. Welcome the paintings or other mark making your child might occasionally bring home. Many of the activities we offer provide your child with excellent learning experiences, and do not have an end product.

If you are approached to help occasionally, please try to come if you possibly can. It can mean a lot to a child to see parents actively involved. If you are not free to attend pre-school sessions, it may be that there are ways you could help at other times, for example, if you play a musical instrument or have a skill to share with the children.

What to wear

In order to feel free to explore and experiment with all kinds of materials, including messy ones, it is best to send children dressed in clothes which are easily washable or not too new. It is good for children to practise the skills which will make them independent. Simple clothing which they can handle themselves will enable them to go to the toilet when they want to and to put on and take off their outdoor clothes without being too dependent on other people's help.

Transitions

We believe that transition periods should be slow. Children need to feel secure throughout the process. When children in the Toddler Room are approaching three years of age, and are ready, both socially and emotionally, to move to the Pre-School Room, children will be taken to visit for short periods accompanied by their key worker. Staff will keep you informed about this process and will introduce you to your child's new key worker.

During the summer term, children in the Pre-School Room who will be starting at St. Nicholas School in the following September, begin their transition visits. Each week every child is taken to play in the reception class for an hour, accompanied by a member of staff from the Pre-School Room.

In line with government policy, when your child leaves The Ark, staff pass on transition sheets containing information about your child's individual development, to the new setting or school that your child will attend. If your child attends another setting at the same time as attending The Ark, your child's key worker will arrange to visit the other setting in order to exchange information.

We hope that your child's time with us will be a very happy and productive one. If you have any questions, or if we can be of any help, please contact the staff at any time.

Session Times & Prices as from 1st September 2019

Toddler & Pre-School Rooms

8.00-8.45	8.45 - 11.30	11.30 - 12.30	12.45 - 3.15	3.15 - 4.15	4.15 - 5.15	5.15 - 6.00
£4.00	£14.25 (under 3s) £13.65 (over 3s)	£4.85	£13.15 (under 3s) £12.60 (over 3s)	£4.85	£4.85	£4.85

<p>Full day: 8.00am – 6.00pm incl. hot lunch & tea £48.20 (under 3s) £45.40 (over 3s) (if not covered by Early Years Education Grant)</p> <p>If not taken as part of a full day: Hot lunch £2.60 Tea 75p</p>						
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Bookings may be term-time only for children in the Toddler & Pre-school Rooms if preferred. Children under statutory school age are eligible for an Early Years Education Grant of 15 hours or 30 hours for working parents (see following link for eligibility criteria - www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/childcare/30-hours-free) from the term after their third birthday. There is also funding available for some two year olds; see <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/twoyearolds/apply> 15 hours of free Pre-school sessions per week. Examples are:

- 2 days: 8.45 – 4.15 FREE
- 3 days: 2 days 8.45 – 3.15; 1 day 08.45 – 11.30 (includes 1 free lunch period and 1 paid lunch period @ £4.75 and totals 14.75 free hours per week)

Other combinations may be possible.

Breakfast Club

For children aged three years upwards. The Breakfast Club runs for 45 minutes before the start of the school day or the first Pre-School session. A light breakfast only is served e.g. cereal, toast and a drink. The fee is £4.65 for school age children and £3.55 for under school age, and is payable regardless of whether your child has a meal.

After School Club/Holiday Club

Various activities are offered, such as free play; arts & crafts, including T-shirt designing, badge-making, pottery painting; cooking healthy snacks; dressing up and role play; indoor games; outdoor activities, including treasure hunts, bug hunts, village walks, team and individual games and sports. All activities are tailored to each age group.

A cooked meal is available at lunchtime for £2.50 during Holiday Club, or children may bring their own packed lunch. Tea is also available, if desired, at £1.20 for school age children and 65p for Toddler and Pre-school children, when staying beyond 4.30pm during After School and Holiday Club

Various outings are organised for which there may be a small additional charge.

School Holiday fees for schoolchildren as from 1st September 2019

8.00– 12.30	12.30 – 1.30	1.30 – 6.00	All Day
£16.15*(£12.10)	£4.85	£16.15 *(£12.10)	£29.15 *(£21.65)

Those attending in the morning may order cooked meals for £2.60 or bring a packed lunch. Second and subsequent siblings receive a *25% discount for After-School and Holiday Club only, providing both/all children are of school age. To calculate the cost of the childcare you require, simply add up each element for each child, each day (not counting any free sessions, as outlined above).

If you are working you may qualify for help with the cost of childcare through Tax Credits from HMRC, or through childcare vouchers if your employer is a member of such a scheme.

Staff

We are proud of the high ratio of adults to children in our group. This ensures individual attention to the needs and development of each child.

Sarah McNab	Manager	NVQ III Level 4 E100 Dev. Practice
Tash Pike	Deputy Manager Lead Practitioner – Pre-School Room	NVQ III
Jody Bunch	Lead Practitioner - Baby Room	Diploma in Childcare
Rae Tucker	Practitioner	NNEB
Emma Turner	Practitioner	NVQ III
Candice Guest	Practitioner	NVQ III
Heather Williams	Practitioner	NVQII
Kerry Baines	Practitioner	NVQ III
Bekki Commons	Lead Practitioner	Level 3 Early Years Educator
Doreen Denham	Practitioner SendCo	NVQ III Level 3 Management & Leadership
Sue Murdoch	Lead Practitioner After School Club	NVQIII
Jane Rodger	Practitioner	NNEB
Wendy Harrison	Assistant	
Rita Revell	Assistant	
Lucy Pike	Apprentice	
Elaine Richards	Cook	
Sam Parry	Administrator	Diploma Office Management
Sharon Lomas	Domestic Assistant	

Training

We are constantly in touch with new thinking in the fields of childcare and education and care. We receive a fortnightly magazine offering practical advice and up to date information, and have access to a range of professionally produced publications. Parents may ask to see any of these. In addition, on-going training is available through Dorset County Council Early Years team. Informal training is available through local forum meetings, and parents will be informed about these. We receive support and guidance from an Early Years & Childcare Adviser.

Policies

Our policies are available at The Ark and can also be downloaded from our website. All our policies are designed to offer the best possible experience for the children and families in the group. Our policies are reviewed on a regular basis and comments and suggestions from parents are always welcome.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The number of adults present in The Ark enables us to provide individual attention for each child. Each child is able to progress at her/his own rate in all areas of development, and this is true for children with and without disabilities or learning difficulties. We are experienced in working in close liaison with professionals across the range of special needs. We receive support and guidance from a special needs advisor. If you would like to discuss the group's ability to meet your own child's special needs, please talk to the Manager.

Admissions

We arrange our waiting list in order of date of the application received for each year group. We cannot take a booking more than nine months in advance of the start date, unless the sessions required are unavailable until later. Priority is given to children with a sibling already attending The Ark. We are flexible about attendance patterns; however we do expect children to start with a minimum of two sessions a week. To secure a childcare place we ask parents to pay a deposit when booking of 50% of four weeks' fees. This deposit is refundable when your child leaves The Ark, **but not if you later decide not to take up the place.** Fees are payable monthly, in advance, and we request one month's notice if you no longer require a childcare place. If any parent has a problem regarding the payment of the deposit or monthly fees, please speak to Sarah or Sam.

We hope you will find the following information useful:

- Old clothes are best for playing in, but we do provide aprons for messy activities.
- We have a 'Healthy Eating Policy'. We can provide nutritious cooked lunches, at a very reasonable cost. We provide drinking water for the 18 months – 5 year olds. If you would like example menus please ask.
- Children are given whole milk or water at snack time. Water is available for the children to help themselves to throughout the sessions.
- Please bring a change of clothes, and indoor shoes in a drawstring bag, and PLEASE NAME ALL ITEMS OF CLOTHING. The children need to wear boots during outside play during the winter months.
- Please make sure you close the outside door when you leave the building, and MAKE SURE YOU BOLT ALL GATES AFTER YOU.
- There is parking at the front of the school for disabled parents or carers. Otherwise, please DO NOT park in the staff car park between the hours of 8.15am and 4.00pm during the school term. There is also limited parking in the recreation ground next to the school, with safe access, by footpath.
- Smoking is not allowed on the premises at all.

Illness:

Please do not bring your child if she/he is unwell and/or has had a temperature above normal within the last 24 hours.

Sickness or diarrhoea – no attendance until 48 hours has passed since the last attack.

High temperature – no attendance until a normal temperature **without medication** for 24 hours

If in doubt either seek medical advice, ask one of the staff, or keep your child at home.

Polo Shirts and Sweatshirts

We have a stock of 'The Ark' polo and sweatshirts which are sold at cost price. Please see Sarah or Sam.

Management and Administration

The Ark is run by an elected committee of directors, which ensures that major decision-making is in the hands of the parents who use the group. The committee is responsible for reviewing both policy and practice, and for the employment of members of staff. Our Annual General Meeting, at which the committee of directors for the following year is elected, is held in January and parents will be informed in good time in order that they may attend.

Trustees

Chairperson/Safeguarding	Pauline Pinkney
Vice Chairperson	Imogen Gater
Treasurer	Maggie Vine
Secretary	Alix Dey
Nursery Manager	Sarah Mcnab
Deputy Manager	Tash Pike
Health & Safety	Kathy Pym
Fundraising Lead	Lauren Ward-Soylemez
Other members	Philippa Tandoh
Other Members	Sam Whiting

Contact details:

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