



The Ark Newsletter February 2010

A belated welcome back to The Ark and the start of a New Year, and we hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas break.

Christmas Fundraising

We are pleased to report that we raised the sum of just under £500.00 through the Christmas Raffle, which is being match funded by HSBC through their Charities Scheme, to make a grand total of £998.90. We are very grateful to everyone who bought a number and everyone who donated a prize.

As the days begin to lengthen we are looking forward to more outside play, and our fundraising will be going towards further improvements to our garden.

Forthcoming Events

Zoolab

A welcome return visit from this wildlife workshop provider on **Wednesday 31st March 2010** at 10.00am for the 3+ Room. This visit has proved a great success in the past with an interactive opportunity for the children to learn about some exotic creatures such as tarantulas and snakes, as well as more familiar animals like rabbits and guinea pigs.

Sounds & Songs from the African Jungle

Another visit from Noah Messomo with his drumming workshop on **Monday 5th July 2010** at 10.00am, again for the 3+ Room. Like Zoolab, Noah's last visit was both enjoyable and educational, and gave the children an insight into another culture.

For both the above events, children in the 3+ Room who do not normally attend on the particular days of the visits are welcome to attend, accompanied by a parent.

Staff Matters

We are happy to report that Emma Anker, who is currently on maternity leave, has advised us that she intends to return to work in the afternoons in the Baby Room from 21st May 2010. Emma will be job-sharing with Jackie as Baby Room Leader; we look forward to welcoming her back.

Late Collection of Children

Occasionally children have been collected after 6.00pm due to unforeseen circumstances. Whilst we do understand that this is beyond parents' control, it is necessary on such occasions for two members of staff to stay until the children are collected. As those members of staff have to be paid for the extra time worked, it has

been decided to charge parents at the rate of £5 for every 15 minutes, or part thereof, in these circumstances.

Parents' Questionnaire

We will shortly be issuing all parents with our annual questionnaire asking for feedback about quality of the childcare we provide. Please do take the time to complete it as we value your input and it helps us make improvements.

Home/The Ark Liaison

You are welcome to speak informally to your children's keyworker 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 keyworker 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.

A Few Reminders

Clothing etc.: Once again, please could you ensure that your children's possessions are **all clearly named**, especially lunch boxes, coats, hats and bags. A name tag is preferred, as hand-written names on clothes labels fade after washing. Any loose clothing or footwear should be in shoe bags, on pegs. This is particularly important as the corridor where they are kept leads to a fire exit. It would be very helpful if gloves could be attached somehow to coats as they are very easy to lose. Also could you please provide a separate drawstring bag for nappies, wipes and nappy cream for all children in the 2-3 room who are still in nappies. We do have drawstring shoe bags for sale in the office if you need one.

Wellies are essential at this time of year, and it would be helpful if you could provide spare clothes to change into in case of accidents or water/paint spills etc. We do have some spare clothes of our own at The Ark for such circumstances, but sometimes not enough for every child that needs them. So please could you remember to return any borrowed clothes promptly, and if you are able to donate any clothes your children have grown out of, particularly pants, socks or trousers for both boys and girls, we would be very grateful.

Fruit donations and Healthy lunchboxes: At The Ark we promote healthy eating and would like to thank you for your continued support in providing a piece of fruit for snack time. The children do enjoy sharing their fruit. Popular fruits are apples, bananas, grapes and pears. PLEASE NO KIWI FRUIT as they are prone to prompt allergic reactions in some children. If your children stay for a lunchtime session and bring a lunchbox, please support our healthy eating ethos by providing your children with a healthy lunch.

Car Parking: School have asked us to remind parents not to park in the car park between 8.15am and 3.30pm during term-time, and to use the marked spaces outside these times please.

OFSTED Award Ceremony

Finally we are pleased to hear that Pauline has been invited to an awards ceremony at the Guildhall in London by OFSTED on 12th February 2010 in recognition of The Ark being deemed 'Outstanding' following their inspection last May.

Dates for your diary

Events

Zoolab - Wednesday 31st March 2010 at 10.00am for the 3+ Room.

Sounds & Songs from the African Jungle - Monday 5th July 2010 at 10.00am for the 3+ Room.

Opening Times

The Ark is open all year round **except:**

All Bank Holidays

Summer - Closed Monday 30th August 2010– Friday 3rd September 2010

Please note school returns on Friday 3rd September 2010, but The Ark will be closed that day.

Christmas - Closed on Friday 24th December 2010, and opening again Tuesday 4th January 2011

Term Time Dates

Spring Term 2010

Tuesday 5th January 2010 – Thursday 1st April 2010

Summer Term 2010

Monday 19th April 2010 – Thursday 22nd July 2010

Autumn Term 2010

Monday 6th September 2010 – Friday 17th December 2010

Half Terms:

Monday 15th February 2010 – Friday 19th February 2010 - Holiday Club at The Ark

Friday 28th May; Tuesday 1st June 2010 – Friday 4th June 2010 - Holiday Club at The Ark

Monday 25th October 2010 – Friday 29th October 2010 - Holiday Club at The Ark