



The Ark Newsletter March 2009

Welcome to the second half of the Spring Term, and a busy time for all of us with plenty of activities planned for the rest of the school year.

Spring/Summer Activities & Events

- Apologies for the short notice, but hopefully you have all seen the posters about World Book Day on Thursday 5th March. We look forward to seeing the children dressed as their favourite book character on this day.
- Also on this day, Thursday 5th March, we have a visit from a local artist and environmental teacher, Mary-Ann Featherstone to help us enhance our outdoor area. Mary-Ann will be involving the children in the creation of a live willow structure, in our garden which the children can help to keep growing healthily in the future.
- Whilst on the subject of our outdoor area, we would be most grateful for any adult help with improvements to our circular sensory garden, which has become rather overgrown. We really need help digging and turning two segments into vegetable plots for the children. Ideally we would like to form a volunteer working party to tackle the garden one weekend soon. If you are able to help please talk to Maggie or Pauline.
- Finally with regard to outdoor play, we have now purchased adequate rainwear for the children to enable them to enjoy outdoor play even if the weather is wet.
- On the morning of Thursday 19th March we are hosting a repeat visit from Zoo Lab who delighted the children last year with their selection of exotic animals such as snakes, tarantulas, giant land snails and more.
- On Thursday 7th May a photographer will be at The Ark to take both individual and family photographs. Please let us know nearer the time if your child does not normally attend on a Thursday, but you would like his/her photograph taken.
- On Wednesday 8th July we have Albert Noah-Messomo presenting sounds and songs from the African jungle. Noah is a professional musician and storyteller, born and raised in Cameroon who brings a strong multicultural element to his visit. As we will be sharing his services with the children from reception class, more details will be given nearer the time.
- On the morning of Friday 17th July there will be a 'leavers' party for all children in the 3 – 5 room, from 9.00am to 12noon. We have booked an entertainer – Bouncing Bodies, who comes highly recommended – for a lively 2 hour session from 10.00am. The party will therefore follow a slightly different format from in the past. There will not be a party lunch; just a party snack during a 15 minute break at 11.00am. Children who are normally booked in for a Friday afternoon only, will come in the morning instead, and those not normally booked for a Friday are invited to attend until noon. Children booked in for the whole day will have their lunch at 12.30pm

and those that normally have hot lunch and then go home, will be credited for the hot lunch not taken.

If your child does not normally attend on the days on which Zoo Lab and/or Albert Noah-Messomo are visiting, you are welcome to bring them to the event providing you stay with them. Alternatively you may book an extra morning session providing we have space in the nursery.

Parents' Questionnaire

Thank you to all those who completed and returned the parents' questionnaires, and apologies for writing children's names on the back, rendering them not confidential.

We are pleased to report that in nearly every area, for both under and over two year olds, marks ranged between 4 and 5 (5 being the highest mark possible). The marks regarding the meals we provide were particularly pleasing at 4.8 to 4.9.

The only area where marks were below this, at an average of 3 to 3.9 was that of the weekly plans, and one point that cropped up several times was that some parents were unaware of where our weekly plans are displayed. Baby Room plans are displayed on the Baby Room door, as well as with the Toddler and 3 – 5 Year Room plans which are displayed on the notice board above the signing-in book in the lobby.

Fundraising

We are pleased to announce that we raised £274 at our recent Jumble Sale, with a little more to come from the company who takes our leftover clothes.

Our next event will be the Easter Draw, which will take place on the last day of the school term ie. Friday 3rd April. Like last year, this will be chocolate themed, first prize yet to be decided.

Several of the staff and committee will be participating in the Race for Life again this summer, and we would be grateful for your support in sponsoring us. Sponsor forms will be displayed at a later date. The Race for Life is a series of nationwide, women only events raising funds for Cancer Research.

Bad Weather Procedures

The recent closure of The Ark on several days, enforced by the snowy weather, has prompted us to reassess our procedures in such circumstances. It would be most helpful if parents were willing to cascade information to other parents in the event of unexpected closure. Please let Pauline or Maggie know if you are willing to help in such circumstances and/or whether you are willing for us to divulge your telephone number to another parent.

A Few Reminders etc.

Name tags: Once again, please could you ensure that your children's possessions are **all clearly named**, especially lunch boxes, coats and bags. A name tag is preferred as hand-written names on clothes labels fade after washing.

Fruit donations: We would not expect donations of fruit for children in the Baby Room, but we do appreciate any fruit donations for snack time for children aged two years and over. Popular fruits are apples, bananas, pears and grapes. PLEASE NO KIWI FRUIT OR STRAWBERRIES as we have a child who has a severe allergic reaction to these fruits.

Children's artwork: All pictures, craftwork etc created by children in the 3 – 5 Room is now available for collection from the unit to the right of the door when entering from the lobby. Work is clipped together on a named clothes peg for ease of identification.

Dates for your diary

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

All Bank Holidays

Summer - Closed Monday 31st August 2009 – Friday 4th September 2009.

Christmas - closed on Thursday 24th December 2009, and opening again Monday 4th January 2010

Term Time Dates

Spring Term

Tuesday 6th January 2009 – Friday 3rd April 2009

Monday 6th – Thursday 9th April 2009 & Tuesday 14th – Monday 20th April 2009 - Holiday Club at The Ark

Summer Term

Tuesday 21st April 2009 – Friday 17th July 2009

Monday 20th July 2009 – Friday 28th August 2009- Holiday Club at The Ark

Half Term: Tuesday 26th May 2009 – Friday 29th May 2009 - Holiday Club at The Ark

Autumn Term

Monday 7th September 2009 – Friday 18th December 2009

Half Term: Monday 26th October 2009 – Friday 30th October 2009 - Holiday Club at The Ark

Monday 21st, Tuesday 22nd & Wednesday 23rd December 2009;
Monday 4th January 2010 – Holiday Club at The Ark

Other Events

Thursday 5th March – World Book Day & Mary-Ann Featherstone working with children in the garden to create a living sculpture.

Thursday 19th March - Zoo Lab visit.

Thursday 7th May – Photographer.

Wednesday 8th July - Albert Noah-Messomo presenting sounds and songs from the African jungle.

Friday 17th July - ‘Leavers’ party