

The Ark Child Okeford

Prospectus

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

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 January, 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.

The Baby Room

Our Nursery has six babies/young children places. The Baby Room is 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, so all babies' and children's

learning needs are met. Daily activities will consist of lots 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, play dough, 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 2-3 Room

We believe that children's emotional security is vitally important, and for this reason have created a doorway between the Baby and Toddler Room 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 2-3 Room, if it is appropriate for their individual development. Transitions take place slowly and naturally. When this transition is almost final your child's new key worker will meet with you to introduce themselves and exchange relevant information with you, about your child's individual needs.

Baby Room Fees

£18.00 per half day	8.00 - 12.30	or	1.30 - 6.00
£3.50 lunch session	12.30 - 1.30		
£36.00 per full day	8.00 - 6.00		

2-3 and 3-5 Rooms

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 3-5's are in the foyer above the signing-in book.

Settling In

Starting at a Nursery is a big step, both for children and for their families. These suggestions are intended to help you make it a successful and happy time:

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.

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 Pauline 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 2-3 Room are ready, both socially and emotionally, to move to the 3-5 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 3-5 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 3-5 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

Term – Time (and during School Holidays for 2 – 3 year olds)

8.00–8.45	9.00 – 11.30	11.30 – 12.30	12.45 – 3.15	3.15 – 4.15	4.15 -5.15	5.15 – 6.00
£3.50	£10.50 for under 3 yrs £9.50 3+ yrs	£3.50	£10.50 under 3yrs £9.50 3+ yrs	£4.00 £9.00 for the full session from 3.15 -6.00	£3.50	£3.50

Children under statutory school age are eligible for an Early Years Education Grant from the term after their third birthday. This entitles your child to 15 hours of free Pre-school sessions. The 15 hours must be taken over a minimum of three days, each session must be a minimum of 2.5 hours, and no more than 7.5 hours may be taken in any one day, during the school term.

Examples are:

- 9.00 – 3.15 + 1 half day 9.00-11.30 or 12.45 – 3.15 FREE 2 days
- 9.00 - 11.30 + 1 day 9.00 - 3.15 (lunch period £3.50) 4 days
- 12.45 - 3.15 + 1 day 9.00 - 3.15 (lunch period £3.50) 4 days
- 9.00 – 3.15 (and three lunch periods @ £3.50 =£10.50) 3 days

Other combinations may be possible.

Breakfast Club

For children aged two years upwards. The Breakfast Club runs for 45 – 60 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 of £3.50 is payable regardless of whether your child has a meal.

After School Club/ Holiday Club

Children are divided into two age groups: 2 – 4 years and 5 – 11 years. 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 £2.00 during Holiday Club, or children may bring their own packed lunch, and we will provide a tea for the children, if desired, when staying beyond 4.30pm during After School and Holiday Clubs.

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

School Holidays for children aged 3 years and over

8.00– 12.30	12.30 – 1.30	1.30 – 6.00	All Day
£12.00	£3.50	£12.00	£20.00

Those attending the lunchtime sessions may order cooked meals for £2.00 or bring a packed lunch. Second and subsequent siblings receive a discount for After-School and Holiday Club only, providing both/all children are aged over 3 years. 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 the 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.

Pauline Pinkney	Manager	NNEB; BA Hons in Early Years working towards Early Years Professional Status
Anne Gunning	Deputy Manager a.m.	Diploma in Pre-school Practice
Fiona Farman	Deputy Manager p.m. 2-3 Room Leader	Diploma in Pre-school Practice
Heather Nye	Early Years Professional 3 – 5 Room Leader	BA Hons in Education & Early Years Professional Status
Karren George	Childcare Practitioner	NVQ III; Diploma Certificate in Occupational Therapy
Helen O’Sullivan	Childcare Practitioner	NVQ III
Susan Olds	Childcare Practitioner	NVQ II Working toward NVQ III
Zoe House	Childcare Practitioner	NVQ III
Sarah White	Childcare Practitioner	NVQII working toward NVQ III
Sarah Beck	Childcare Practitioner	Working towards NVQ II
Emma Anker	Childcare Practitioner 0 – 2 Joint Room Leader	NNEB
Jackie Netherway	Childcare Practitioner 0-2’s Joint Room Leader	NVQ III
Josie House	Childcare Practitioner	NVQ III
Sarah Smith	Childcare Practitioner	NVQ III
Carly Ricketts	5 – 10s Leader 3 – 5s Childcare Practitioner	NVQ III in Early Years Care & Education NVQ III in Playwork
Katie Howell	Childcare Practitioner	
Rita Revell	Childcare Practitioner	
Rachel Sims	Childcare Practitioner	
Katie Stevens	Childcare Practitioner	Apprentice working toward NVQ II
Gail Belbin	Cook	
Maggie Vine	Administrator	Administrator BSc in Management Sciences

Training

We are constantly in touch with new thinking in the fields of childcare and education and care. We receive a monthly 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 Advisory Teacher.

Policies

Our policy statements are displayed on the notice board. 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 needs

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 childcare manager or your child's key worker.

Admissions

We arrange our waiting list in order of date of the application received for each year group. We are flexible about attendance patterns; however we do recommend children start with a minimum of two sessions a week. To secure a childcare place we ask parents to pay a deposit when booking, of £50.00 for children aged two years and above, and four weeks fees for children under two years of age. This deposit is refundable from the first invoice. 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 Pauline or Maggie.

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 2 – 5 year olds. If you would like example menus please ask in the office.
- Children are given Organic Whole Milk or water at snack time. Water is available for the children to help themselves to throughout the sessions.
- Please bring fruit for the children to share at snack time.
- 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 a temperature above normal.

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

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

Poloshirts and Sweatshirts

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

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.

Committee

Chairman	Nicola Horlock
Secretary	Suzanne Chinnock
Treasurer	Susanna De Ferry Foster
Other members	Cherise Sweatland Isabel Wood Katie McMahon Claire Brooker Rachel Andrew Val Bridge Isabel Wood Emma Reach Vicky Wild Sarah Cumber

Contact details:

The Ark
c/o St. Nicholas School
Station Road
Child Okeford
Blandford
Dorset
DT11 8EL

Telephone: 01258 861007 **Email:** thearkchildokeford@hotmail.co.uk

Website: www.thearkchildokeford.co.uk

Company Number **06641688** Charity Number **1125688**

