



The Ark Pre-School Manager's Report 2017/18

This year has gone so quickly, it is hard to believe that the summer break is just around the corner. We have had a delightful cohort of children this academic year and have enjoyed sharing in a range of activities with them. We have made very few adjustments to the routine this year, as it seems to be working well. The main change has been to swap music time and Show and Tell time. After Tidy Up Time the staff place coloured carpet shapes in a circle around around the large rug. Then we sing a song to encourage the children to find an empty shape to sit on. This way, the children are easily placed in a large circle, where they can all see each other and participate in the music activity. Following this, we help children to learn their colours/shapes by singing a colour/shape mat that needs to be put away. The children enjoy the responsibility of putting their own mats away, as well as helping each other identify colours and shapes.

Show and Tell time now happens during the last five minutes of the session. Although some children are keen to bring in something to show every day, we focus primarily on those children who have been allocated that particular day. It is always helpful if children bring in something related to the topic, letter or sounds as this gives the staff more scope for developing vocabulary used during the session.

Snack time continues with the same format as last year with the addition of Spanish in our choice of languages for counting the children. After snack, we continue to call the older children for a staff led activity based on the letter or rhyming word for the week. Each child has two opportunities a week to practise reading and writing these letters/sounds.

During the summer term we have continued to provide an English or Mathematics activity for the most able children on a daily basis. This take place around 9.30am for approximately 10-15 minutes. The children have enjoyed the challenges given to them and are always keen to have a go.

Earlier in the year, when our computer broke, we looked into the option of having it fixed but since it is not compulsory to have a computer in the setting we decided to be imaginative and created a technology workbench. We provide broken electrical items for the children to take apart with a toolbox of various tools.

One of the areas we have thought about carefully is the dismissal of children at the end of the session which was very congested. After taking advice from the Committee, we decided to exit the children through the fire doors, ensuring they leave with a responsible adult and this new system seems to be working very well.

Following on from our ECAT training we decided to introduce five new words for the week. With much thanks to Clare Divall, our main display board has been beautifully designed to link with our topic and display, the words of the week. We let parents know the words for each week so that they can use them with the children at home. When we hear children regularly using these words we write their names on one of the pictures, where that word is written. This has been particularly helpful when encouraging the more shy children.

'Fun in the Forest' sessions have been very much enjoyed this year. The children have come up with their own ideas of things they would like to explore and we have been very thankful to the adult helpers who have made these sessions possible.

Once again we participated in World Book day, despite the snow! We gave the children a second opportunity to dress up, in case they had missed the session on the snowy day. The children enjoyed telling about their characters and sharing their books.

Our assemblies took place at Harvest and Christmas and at the end of the summer term for leavers going to school. It was great to see so many parents/carers attending these, as well as extended family and friends. We have also appreciated members of the church coming in to read stories to the children.

We have enjoyed numerous trips to the library this year, both for selecting books related to our topic and also for a storytelling session with the librarian. During our topic of Books the library kindly organised a treasure hunt and storytelling session and gave all the children a pencil to take home. We have also taken the children to the Morgan Rec and in small groups to shops in the High Street.

During our spring term trip to Chaucer Woods, in addition to the activities we had planned in previous years, all the children painted a stone as a minibeast and we hid them in the woods. We registered onto Crowthorne Rocks Facebook page and I hope that other children will have fun finding and re-hiding our stones.

This year our summer trip took place at South Hill Park as part of our plan to alternate with Sandhurst Park to give the children experience of different places during their time with us. We were blessed with the weather and we all had a good time. It was certainly handy having an Aldi next to us, where we could buy ice-creams.

One new initiative this year has been to develop links with St Brendan's – a local care home. At Easter, the children and staff walked to the care home, modelling the Easter bonnets they had made. The children sang some familiar rhymes and songs with the residents and some children also sang nursery rhymes at St Brendan's Open Day in April. The Ark has been invited to come back regularly, so we have agreed to visit once a term. This term we visited in June and did some gardening with the residents and we plan different activities for each visit.

Sports Day took place on the Morgan Rec again and we were certainly blessed with the weather this year. We were very appreciative of the sponsor money that was donated through the mini marathon. It is encouraging to see the many families that stay on to share a picnic together and get to know each other better.

This year was the year of the Carnival and we were delighted that the Ark could be a part of this. Another huge thank you to Clare Divald for taking the lead with the planning and craft ideas and many, many congratulations for achieving second place which is a first in the history of the Ark!

In September we shall be transferring from written learning journals to an on-line system using an app called Tapestry. We are confident that this will be a big improvement on our current system and look forward to learning together and receiving your feedback.

We would personally like to thank all the parents for their involvement and continued support. We continue to receive so much positive feedback for which we are very grateful. Our numbers are also very healthy for the next academic year so thank you for recommending us. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with parents and carers and to involve them as much as possible in their child's learning and development.

Heather Sinclair
Manager
20 July 2018