



The Ark Pre-School Parents' Survey Results 2022

Dear parents/ carers,

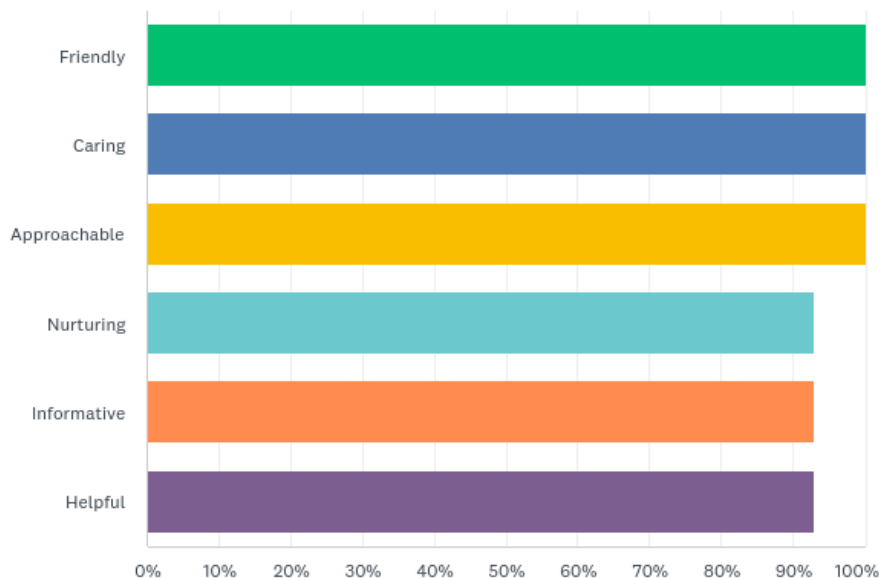
Thank you for taking the time to complete The Ark Pre-school Parent Survey. We received 14 responses to this online survey, and we really appreciate the time taken by these parents to give us your feedback. It helps us to strive to provide the best care for your children.

1) Is your child happy at the Ark?

100% of the respondents answered YES

Your comments indicated that the children love coming to The Ark and spending time with friends and all the staff team. The children especially enjoy the wide range of learning experiences and activities.

2) How do you find the staff?



Your comments indicated that the staff are welcoming, approachable and caring. A few of the comments:

- Feel very happy that my little boy is looked after by such caring and gentle staff.*
- A* for all staff. There's a real sense all staff know and understand our child's needs - not just the key worker.*
- Best thing about the ark*

3) Are you satisfied with the care we provide?

100% of the respondents answered Very Satisfied or Satisfied.

One respondent said: "End of week lunch clubs." and another queried the benefits of the Fun in the Forest mornings saying, "I think the care for older children going to school has been slightly diminished by the number of mornings spent walking. I don't think this is the best thing in terms of getting used to school but I appreciate the need for providing outdoor time."

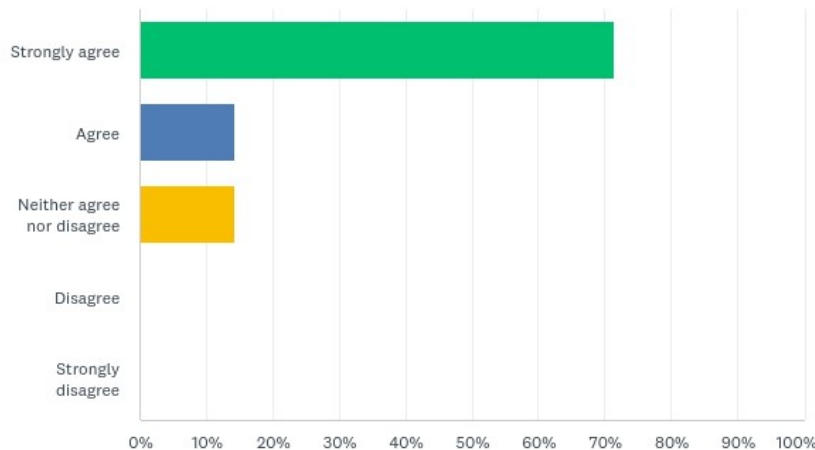
Please see our response at the end of this document regarding the Fun in the Forest sessions.

4) Are you satisfied with the level of communication received from The Ark since your child started at The Ark (including initial registration packs issued, parent consultations, regular email reminders, newsletters, website, Facebook updates)?

100% of those who responded answered YES

A couple of respondents mentioned that they would find it helpful if reports were emailed or uploaded to Tapestry.

5) My child's learning and development within the curriculum is well supported by the staff in the setting, and they are making good progress?



One respondent commented, "We have noticed clear developments at home in our child's learning." Another commented that they do not know the curriculum. One respondent also mentioned that they feel the walking time (Fun in the Forest) has decreased their child's development and learning for their stage.

6) Are you happy with the range of activities we provide?

100% of those who responded answered Very Satisfied or Satisfied

Comments included:

- Now the warmer weather is on its way the Forest School will be very enjoyable activity to keep little one outside.*
- It's a shame there is now such a small outdoor area at the centre - my older children enjoyed being able to chose freely*
- Very pleased with the range of craft activities always available.*
- I think indoors yes but compared to other settings it is on the more limited side. There is an aspect of quality over quantity. It is a shame there are less outdoor activities available on site and I think the walking gets repetitive - I know you are trying really hard and I think are doing great with what you have*
- We particularly love the addition of forest school*

7) I am well informed about my child's progress.

100% of the respondents answered Strongly Agree or Agree

Your comments mentioned how much you value the regular posts and updates on Tapestry and that you appreciate being able to talk through them with your children. One person mentioned that updates show how well the staff know their child.

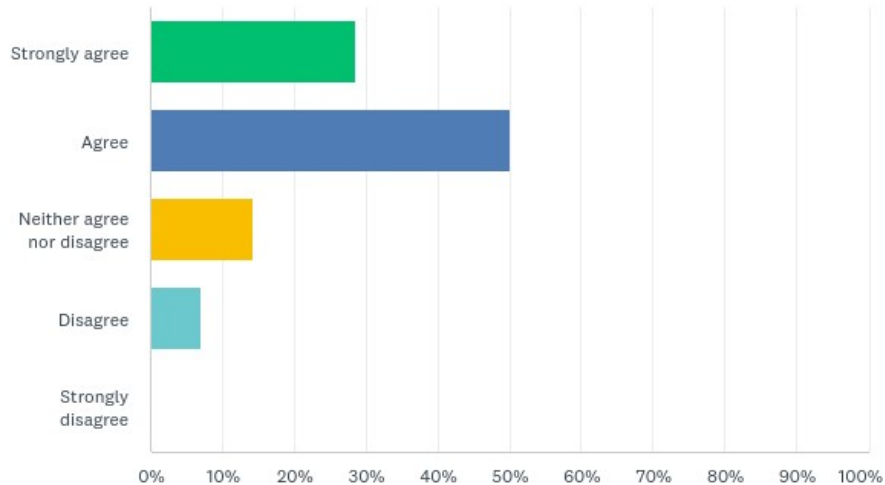
8) Do you feel adequately involved in the life of The Ark?

100% of the respondents answered YES

The comments submitted were:

- As a working Mum it is hard to feel involved but Tapestry really helps and we try to attend as event that is happening to show support*
- It would be good to view the setting as this still had not been offered since COVID or even for Naomi to make a film of the empty setting and email it out, if more COVID secure*

9) My child benefits from the balance between the Fun in the Forest days at Wellington, and time in The Ark setting.



The comments submitted were:

- *One day a week in the winter is very good. Rising to 2 days in spring/summer too*
- *My child loves fun in the forest days and would do it everyday if he could!*
- *Not doing forest days this term due to days. Last term was less happy to be dropped off on forest day (quite young so maybe quite a lot of walking)*
- *Although he enjoys the forest, he prefers the indoor setting due to the range of activities. We spend a lot of time out and about so perhaps that's why.*
- *Although my child often verbalises they don't want to do the fun in the forest days when waterproofs are required or the weather is wet It was good the session was canceled this week due to wind, but one probably could have been cancelled the week before with the heavy rain*
- *One morning is ok, two mornings out of the three they are there is too much*

10) Do you have any suggestions of things we can improve, or any general feedback?

The comments submitted mentioned:

- *Just putting the reports on Tapestry would be great please*
- *All good many thanks. Enjoy!*
- *We think you do a fantastic job. Thank you so much x*
- *Thank you for all your efforts, it's a lovely preschool*
- *I think the care and the people and the number of children is the best thing- it is such a a shame the outdoor space has been lost.*
- *My child loves attending the Ark, especially the staff, so keep doing what you are doing*

Our response:

Thank you to all the parents who responded; your feedback and questions are very much appreciated. We are very encouraged by the positive comments you have shared.

We are asked to review our hours of operation on an annual basis. Unfortunately, we cannot change our opening times, or add sessions or lunch clubs at this time due to the need to recruit many more staff, and use the church building for longer periods of time. The committee will continue to review this.

We decided to have two mornings at Wellington doing Forest Schooling type activities as we recognise the proven benefits of Outdoor Learning (see attached sheet for more detail). We really valued our time outside when we were based at Wellington, seeing the benefits for the children physically, mentally and socially. We feel very privileged to be able to continue using such a great location. As we now have a very small outdoor area we feel that our Fun in the Forest days mean the children are getting the right balance between indoor and outdoor learning.

[Continued on next page]

We are still preparing the children for school whilst being outside - some of our more formal activities include mark making with sticks, looking for letters and numbers in signs, counting activities and matching numeral and quantity. We also sing counting songs and tell stories in the woods. The children are trained to become independent as they learn to go to the toilet by themselves and empty out boots, take off/put on coats according to weather changes.

One parent expressed appreciation that we cancelled a Fun in the Forest session when high winds were forecast. We aim to be out in all weathers and seasons, but we will of course cancel if severe weather makes it unsafe to be out. We do see that the children benefit from being outside in a wide range of weathers - they particularly enjoy jumping in puddles and finding places to build a shelter in rainy weather. They have observed changes throughout the different seasons and learn what to wear for different weather conditions. Experiencing different weathers teaches children to be resilient, prepared and to look for the positives in all situations.

Fun in the Forest days change termly to allow all children an opportunity to experience the different environments we meet in. If you are unhappy about the combination of days your child attends, there is some flexibility in switching days on a termly basis. You would need to email Naomi (admin@thearkpreschoolcrowthorne.org.uk) about this possibility, and it is subject to availability.

We appreciate that parents may like to have a copy of the reports, and that it is helpful if both parents are unable to attend parent consultation meetings. Since the curriculum has changed, Ofsted focus is on decreasing the time staff spend on paperwork and increasing the time spent with the children. Putting the reports on Tapestry would add extra hours for all staff members, but in future we will photocopy these reports for you to take home after the meetings if you would like to which we hope will address any issues.

One parent mentioned not knowing the curriculum: on our website under Information for Parents you can find an overview of the Early Years Foundation stage guidelines and curriculum, as well as a link to an EYFS Parents Guide (<http://thearkpreschoolcrowthorne.org.uk/information-for-parents.html>).

At The Ark we do a range of activities throughout the morning, including child lead and teacher directed tasks. The hall is always tidied away before snack time, so that afterwards the children have space to develop their physical skills. You can see the various activities we do by reading "A Typical day at The Ark" which can be found in your Welcome pack and on the website (<http://thearkpreschoolcrowthorne.org.uk/a-typical-day-at-the-ark.html>).

We would like to return to having an open door policy for the first 15 minutes of each morning, which we paused during Covid. We welcome children and their parents/carers into the setting and you are welcome to stay until 9.30am.

We also plan to restart our Stay and Play sessions in the Autumn term which will give parents an opportunity to come into the setting and engage in play with their child.

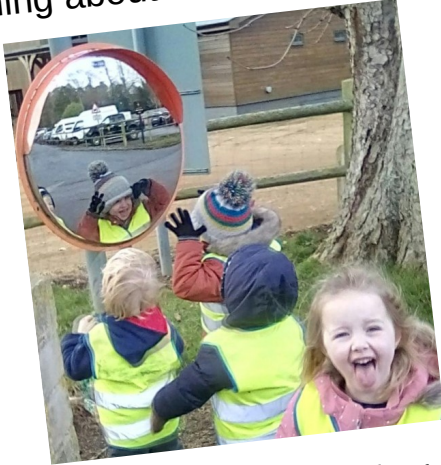
Thank you for your continued support.
The Ark Team.

Why is outdoor play important?

Images: The Ark

Notes: Nursery World/Heather Sinclair

Health, emotional well-being and self image grow when children are able to create personal challenges of the right kind and level for them, learning about keeping safe as they do so.



Interaction with the natural world develops the feeling of being part of nature, not apart from it, nurturing willing and able caretakers – it also benefits children's mental health and grows resilience.

Relationships with adults and other children: for all sorts of reasons, relationships are different outdoors, conflicts are rarer, and enjoyable conversations more common.



The outdoor world is full of interest, feeding curiosity and fascination, so that meaningful opportunities for learning, expressing and developing abound.

Learning outdoors engages and deeply involves children, satisfying their strong drive to explore and make sense of their world and cultivating important dispositions for learning.



Repetition of routes allows the children to build associations with each stop along the route (e.g. king of the castle tree stumps, dinosaur woods, pirate ship) and observe seasonal changes.

What do we do at Fun in the Forest?



Birdwatching, spotting and identifying vehicles, listening to sounds around us, problem solving, learning to assess risks, measuring with string and sticks, hunting for minibeasts, spotting seasonal and man made changes in the environment, art and craft: e.g. leaf/bark rubbing and making nature crowns, memory games, hide and seek, shadow investigations, making natural collages, splashing in puddles, and much more!

Different types of movement - climbing, sliding, running, jumping, rolling, hopping, skipping...

Imaginative play – in dens, along a jungle path,



Taking turns using equipment – binoculars, compass

Reading books, singing, snacktime

Spotting letters, shapes and numbers



Collecting natural objects (pinecones, stones, sticks, leaves) and building with them, comparing their sizes, pushing them into hard mud/soft sand.

Finding out about the world: e.g. investigating a springy branch and working together to play on it safely, bending branches, feeling textures.

