



The Ark Overview

2025-26



THE ST. MARY'S
PARTNERSHIP

About Us

The Ark is our resources provision for Year 2 pupils with EHCP's, that focuses on addressing the four broad areas of need as identified in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice:

Communication and Interaction	Cognition and Learning	Social Emotional and Mental Health	Sensory and Physical
<p>Objective: Enhance speech, language, and communication skills through tailored interventions.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of visual aids (e.g., symbols, pictures, sign language) to support understanding and expression. ○ Small group sessions for speech therapy and language development. ○ Structured opportunities for turn-taking, sharing ideas, and engaging in conversations with peers and adults. ○ Social skills groups to encourage peer interaction and emotional understanding. 	<p>Objective: Support pupils with academic learning needs, ensuring access to the full curriculum at an appropriate level.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Differentiated lessons with additional visual and tactile learning materials. ○ Use of hands-on activities to reinforce concepts (e.g., concrete resources, interactive lessons). ○ Regular one-to-one or small group support to build confidence and understanding. ○ Short, clear instructions and repetition to reinforce learning. 	<p>Objective: Promote emotional wellbeing and self-regulation for pupils with social, emotional, and mental health needs.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incorporating mindfulness exercises, calming techniques, and safe spaces for pupils to regulate emotions. ○ Regular check-ins with a key worker to build trusting relationships. ○ Teaching of social-emotional skills, such as empathy, resilience, and managing frustrations. ○ Positive reinforcement to celebrate achievements, no matter how small. 	<p>Objective: Address and accommodate any sensory or physical needs that affect participation and learning.</p> <p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing sensory breaks and equipment (e.g., fidget toys, noise-cancelling headphones) to help students focus. ○ Adapting classroom environment (e.g., dimming lights, quiet areas) to minimize sensory overload. ○ Access to physical support as required (e.g., mobility aids, positioning aids). ○ Adjusted PE and movement activities to cater to different physical needs and promote gross motor development.

Our Unique Offer

The Ark is located in Mason Moor Primary School, a one-form mainstream primary school for 2–11-year-olds. We offer children the opportunity to access specialist SEND teaching and mainstream classes, ensuring children establish connections with their peers and develop the social skills needed for the wider world. Children can access classes based on their development, with specialist support to ensure they access the fantastic curriculum we offer.

In this inclusive school environment, students from the Ark class have meaningful opportunities to access mainstream classes, fostering a sense of belonging and promoting equality. This approach encourages collaboration between support staff and classroom teachers to adapt lessons, resources, and teaching strategies to meet diverse needs. By learning alongside their peers, SEND students benefit from increased social interaction, while all learners gain a deeper understanding of diversity, empathy, and respect. Such inclusive settings not only enhance academic outcomes but also contribute to a more compassionate and supportive school community.



Key Features of the Ark SEND Unit:

- **Individualised Learning Plans:** Each pupil has a bespoke plan based on their specific needs as outlined in their EHCP. This is reviewed regularly and used to inform planning and assessment for each individual pupil.
- **Staffing:** Highly skilled and trained staff, including our EYFS specialist and SEND teaching assistants, work closely with pupils to implement these strategies.
- **Collaborative Approach:** Regular communication with parents, external professionals, and other educators to ensure a holistic approach to supporting the pupils.
- **Inclusive Environment:** A focus on creating an environment where every pupil feels valued, included, and able to achieve their best potential, adapting to the needs of each child.

The aim is to provide a supportive, nurturing environment where each pupil's strengths are celebrated, and their challenges are addressed with individualised care and attention. Children in the Ark continue to make progress against their EHCP and the Pre-Key Stage Standards.



Planning and Assessment

The Pre-Key Stage Standards

All children currently in the Ark have moved on from the Engagement Model into subject specific learning, therefore we use the pre-key stage standards for planning and assessment. They outline the foundational skills and knowledge expected of children who are not yet working at the national curriculum level for Key Stage 1. These standards are designed to support pupils with additional needs or those who require a more tailored approach to learning. They cover key areas such as communication, language, reading, writing, and mathematics, emphasising the development of basic skills like letter recognition, simple word reading, number understanding, and forming basic sentences. The standards are structured to provide a clear progression, ensuring that pupils build confidence and competence before advancing to more complex curriculum expectations. They aim to ensure inclusivity while promoting measurable progress for all learners.

All children access differentiated resources and teaching from the Pre-Key Stage Standards to ensure they are accessing the most appropriate provision for them.

Continuous Provision

Continuous provision is provided daily, to ensure children continue to develop the life-long skills needed for learning, socialising and their development.

The Engagement Model is an approach designed to support pupils with SEND, particularly those who have severe or complex needs, by focusing on their engagement in learning rather than traditional academic outcomes. This model identifies five key areas of engagement: Exploration, Realisation, Anticipation, Persistence, and Initiation. It aims to help pupils actively engage with their environment, experience positive learning interactions, and build foundational skills at their own pace. For some of our pupils, the Engagement Model encourages hands-on, sensory-rich activities that promote curiosity, exploration, and active participation. The emphasis is on providing individualised support that matches each pupil's developmental stage, with the goal of fostering greater independence and a love for learning, even if it is at a non-traditional pace. By focusing on how children engage with their world, rather than conventional academic progress, the model ensures that all pupils are given the opportunity to succeed and thrive in their learning journey.

Planning for continuous provision includes elements of the Engagement Model and the four Areas of Need. This approach allows staff to monitor and assess progress of a child's EHCP targets, and tailor the provision to each individual child's needs. Children in the Ark have moved on from the Engagement Model, but the principles of this allow us to continue developing the skills they need to thrive.

All assessments and observations are uploaded to Tapestry to share with parents and carers.



Phonics

As a school, we use Pip and Pap Phonics, an engaging Systematic Synthetic Phonics Scheme. In the Ark, we have a range of Phonics abilities and cater the teaching to the needs of the child. In 2025-26, we offer:

- Orange Phase
- Pink Phase
- Green Phase
- Rainbow Phase – a programme designed to build phonological and phonemic awareness.

Children learn the phase at their own pace and Phonics teaching is adapted to meet the needs of the child.

All children access Rainbow Phase phonics at the beginning of the academic year to continue building on their phonological awareness and develop the early language skills needed for effective communication.

All children receive a Phonics book linked to their learning, alongside a library book to read for pleasure with their families. Tapestry videos are uploaded to support parents and carers with Phonics at home.



Interventions in the Ark

Interventions are structured strategies designed to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) by addressing their unique challenges and enabling them to achieve their potential. These interventions can be academic, behavioural, emotional, or social and are typically tailored to the individual needs of each child. Here are the keyways they help:

1. **Personalised Support:** Interventions are customised to target specific difficulties, such as literacy, numeracy, communication, or motor skills, ensuring children receive the precise help they need.
2. **Improved Access to Learning:** By breaking down barriers to education, interventions enable children to engage with the curriculum and participate in classroom activities.
3. **Skill Development:** Focused programs help children develop essential skills, such as language, problem-solving, or self-regulation, enhancing their overall development.
4. **Boosting Confidence and Independence:** Success in targeted areas builds children's self-esteem and encourages greater independence, improving their ability to navigate everyday challenges.
5. **Behavioural and Emotional Support:** Interventions provide coping strategies for managing emotions or behaviours, fostering a positive learning environment.
6. **Collaboration:** Effective interventions often involve collaboration between educators, specialists, and families, ensuring consistent support across all settings.
7. **Monitoring Progress:** Regular assessment of intervention outcomes ensures that support remains effective and is adapted as needed to meet evolving needs.

The following interventions are used in The Ark:

- Sensory Circuits
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Intensive Interaction
- Speech and Language
- Rainbow phase phonics
- Waldon Therapy
- Attention Autism



