



Arndale Nursery & Creche

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	105261
Inspection date	14 June 2006
Inspector	Lorraine Meldrum Sunter
Setting Address	Unit 35, Arndale Centre, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 2TG
Telephone number	01582 402328
E-mail	Pamj_swain@hotmail.com
Registered person	Arndale Nursery & Creche
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

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THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Arndale Nursery and Crèche opened in 1986 and offers a range of services to children and families within the Luton area. It is open for full day care, wraparound care, educational sessions and a shoppers crèche for children from two years to eight years for 52 weeks of the year each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 and on Saturdays from 09.00 to 16.30. The parents support drop-in is open each weekday from 10.00 to 14.30 all year round and caters for parents, grandparents, carers and

childminders who stay with their babies and children. Other weekly services are offered to parents and families in four nearby settings and also a mobile crèche which form an overall part of the children's centre.

There are currently 139 children aged from two years to four years on roll in the day nursery; 52 receive nursery education. The nursery offers a maximum of 60 places. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language.

The centre is part of the Sure Start children's centre programme and is managed by a parent committee who are responsible for the financial and legal side of the centre, including the management budget. There is an overall centre manager. She is supported by two supervisors and a deputy. There are 30 staff who work with the children, which includes casual staff and two administrative staff. The majority of the staff have early year's qualifications. There is a part-time nursery teacher who provides support in the day nursery.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. Children have a very good awareness of how and why we wash our hands and when it is important to do so. For example, they wash before meals and snacks, after messy activities and after handling the African snails. However, some hand washing facilities and children's access to a mop and bucket in the creative area do not promote good hygiene practises and compromises children's health. The children are protected from infection through well-managed hygiene routines which are practised by the nursery, such as nappy changing routines, individual flannels for each child, anti-bacterial spray to clean tables before eating, the sick child policy and the good practice by staff as they wear disposable gloves when changing nappies. Overall the high standard of cleanliness throughout the nursery contributes to the children's good health. Toys throughout the nursery are maintained to a good standard and a record is kept of the cleaning rota in these areas. Staff are well informed about children's health issues and all relevant records and documents are in place. A suitable percentage of staff hold first aid certificates and are aware of how to administer first aid to the children. First aid boxes both indoors and outdoors are suitably stocked and checked regularly. All required records and documents are in place to maintain children's good health.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. The nursery has gained a healthy eating award for the third year running and this additional knowledge helps staff provide children with varied, nutritious snacks in accordance to their needs. Any allergies or dietary requirements are complied with and displayed for all staff to view in the eating area. Extra information is provided for parents to keep them informed of healthy food items to include in their child's packed lunch boxes which are stored in a fridge. A report is filled in for parents about the food their child has eaten during the day. The food

provided is ample for the children. The group receive support from a dietician which enables them to provide healthy, balanced snacks such as carrot sticks with cream crackers, bread and butter with banana and a range of fruit. The nursery provides tea for the children and encourages them to participate in making their own sandwiches from a choice of fillings such as ham, cheese and tuna. Children learn about healthy food through topics and discussions. Staff sit with them and encourage them to eat the savoury items before the sweet items and involve them in discussions about why cheese is good for healthy teeth and bones. Meal times were observed to be a lovely social occasion for the children. Children operate independently pouring their own drinks and a water is freely available from a dispenser throughout the day.

Children enjoy an extensive and stimulating range of equipment to promote a healthy life and their physical development. The outdoor area has been renovated to provide a colourful and cheerful area for small groups of children to access. This enables them to take part in some physical activities such as basketball, throwing and catching balls and using hoops and riding bikes to negotiate obstacles. Well-planned indoor activities encourages children to use their bodies to keep fit and healthy. They confidently use the climbing frame to jump, balance and slide. Children move with confidence and skill as they balance on boards and flower pot stilts. They use their bodies to create a desired effect as they balance and manoeuvre a marble on a balancing board and take part in group events such as the parachute. Children's dexterity and hand and eye coordination is developed as they enjoy playing with small world figures, manipulate construction toys and cut, glue and paint using a variety of tools.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' guidance well to provide a good range of physical play experiences for younger children. Children are able to nap and sleep as required and staff are adept at noticing when a child needs to have a quiet time. This benefits children as individual sleep and rest patterns can be observed.

The centre provides information and support for parents on additional health issues. This has included an informative session on the effects of smoking and how to stop, healthy eating and dental care. These sessions have increased the parents awareness of health issues and this has a positive impact on improving children's health within the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is paramount to the organisation of the nursery. Staff recognise hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. Systematic risk assessments are carried out and all staff share in the responsibility for keeping the children safe. Accident records are maintained and shared with parents. This information is correlated for risk assessments in order to recognise and reduce risks to the children. Well implemented safety and security precautions are in place to promote and safeguard the children's welfare. For example, they use a coded key pad entry system, a password for unfamiliar adults collecting children, uncleared staff or students do not work unsupervised with children, unfamiliar parents accessing the

drop in centre are accompanied through the nursery. Secure systems are in place when children walk to and from the outdoor play area and when accessing the play area. For example, staff carry a mobile phone and monitor the security of the gate into the outdoor area. Staff help children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe in the nursery as they explain and practise simple procedures such as emergency evacuation. However, this is not practised regularly with the children to develop their understanding. Children know the boundaries necessary to keep themselves safe such as not throwing toys, not running inside and picking toys up so others won't trip and fall. Staff effectively explain safety to the children in a simple but positive manner aimed at their level of understanding so they can operate safely within their environment. Supervision of the children is high and any sleeping children are checked regularly and this information is documented.

Children use a broad range of safe, good quality, age-appropriate toys, furniture and equipment. These are well-maintained throughout the nursery. Children play an active role in their own safety notifying an adult if something is broken. Sensitive reminders by staff encourage children to share in the responsibility for their own safety and that of others. Children show respect for their toys and equipment and eagerly help to tidy items away. Staff have developed a good system to encourage children to tidy up by finding a number of items in relation to the number of the week and they receive a reward sticker for doing so. Children understand safety rules such as not using the climbing frame when the red cones are in position and know to ask an adult before accessing the frames. Children recognise about keeping themselves safe in the sun and state 'it is good we have sunhats on because it is so hot'. However, the outdoor area lacks shade for the children on hot sunny days which limits their play experiences and potentially exposes children to dangers from the sun.

Children's welfare is mostly safeguarded and promoted through current policies and procedures for the protection of children. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection and the procedures to follow. However, the child protection policy does not state what to do in the event of an allegation made against a member of staff or contain updated details based on 'What To Do If Your Worried A Child Is Being Abused - Summary'. The majority of staff have attended child protection training to update their knowledge. Their good practice ensures any concerns are dealt with in a sensitive manner and a designated person is responsible to share information with outside agencies to ensure children are protected at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, contented and secure throughout the nursery. They confidently access the stimulating and challenging range of activities and are forming secure relationships with the staff and other children. Staff have a sound awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this has a positive effect on the younger children's achievements. Staff plan activities in line with this framework and have gained a secure knowledge about how children achieve. Children's development is recorded against this framework and provides a clear record of their progress. This

information is used to give staff good starting points for children as they reach the Foundation Stage. All children receive lots of cuddles and have developed strong bonds with their key workers which increases their sense of well-being and contentment. They clearly benefit from the routines although at times these are rigorous and limit children's ability to freely access all resources, work at their own pace and be spontaneous and independent.

Children are attentive and concentrate during group story times. These are brought alive by staff as they engage the children encouraging them to interact at appropriate times with props and sharing their own experiences. For example, children discuss the Luton Carnival, seeing dolphins and listening to the sea in shells. Children greatly enjoy sharing books for pleasure and through regular visits to the library choosing books for the nursery. This pleasure in books is also enhanced by the link with 'Bookstart' and the free book packs given to children. Children of all ages and abilities use a range of creative materials such as paint, sticking, playdough, gloop and other messy activities. They learn through these experiences and are directly involved and interested in their play. A visiting musician introduces the children to many types of music as they experiment with sound. Children particularly enjoy the Karaoke sessions as they sing their favourite songs with confidence. Children of all ages learn about responsibilities and are allowed to make errors, decisions and choices as they select activities and share their play with others.

Children exhibit high levels of confidence and security and this has been achieved by the consistent support and direction of staff. Older children are starting to resolve their differences. They are encouraged to talk about it and find their own solutions. This provides children with tools to become aware of others and negotiate conflict. Younger children often seek out staff to share experiences with or to gain support for an activity. Children are receptive to the constant praise and encouragement that is provided by staff. This has a clear impact on their self-esteem and encourages them to try new tasks and participate in activities. All children are able to participate in a variety of well planned activities which takes account of those children who attend either full time or part time sessions.

Nursery Education

Children are engaged and happy as they move around the nursery and take part in activities. They enter the group confidently and separate from their carers with ease. They have a strong sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff seeking out friends to share play with. Behaviour is very good as the children know the routines and what is expected of them. They play cooperatively together and this was demonstrated well during role play as a group of children played in the home corner dressing dolls, caring and feeding them and doing the washing and ironing. They show wonderful interaction together as they engage in play. Another group play together dressing up as dogs and taking the 'dog' for a walk. Some independence skills are limited by the layout of the room and storage of activities. This hinders children's free choice and ability to act spontaneously and work at their own pace.

A language rich environment is created as staff engage children in conversations and discussion. They use language for thinking as they take part in conversation. For example, when discussing the snails staff ask open-ended questions to encourage

children to think things through and introduce them to new words. Children enjoy using language in their imaginative play and during group discussion. They are learning sounds of letters and can recognise their names. Good use of labels on familiar objects around the room helps children's emergent reading skills as they recognise the familiar objects. A writing and mark making table is available with a range of resources. However, children have limited access to this and are not always able to extend this aspect in other areas of play such as role play situations. Children use other resources to make marks such as sand and gloop creating patterns and marks they give meaning to.

Children are confident counters and can recognise written numbers, count and match objects and are becoming adept at simple problem solving. For example, children work out which objects will sink or float. Children match patterns on a peg board and can describe the shapes used. For example, a square, circle and rectangle. Staff provide children with opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They have fun as they handle and care for the African snails. They learn to be gentle with them and talk about how they move, feel and what they eat. Children use lovely descriptive words such as warm, soft and tickly describing how they move as 'slow like a snail'. Children discover how things grow and change as they watch caterpillars change into a chrysalis and then emerge into butterflies. Children use their own experiences during role play as they take part in familiar situations, such as a home corner and vets. This is also extended through different programmes on the computer. Different cultures are explored with the celebration of festivals, dressing up, food, resources and books. Creative activities give children a sense of achievement as they are able to use their own abilities and skills. Children use their imaginations to extend their physical play. For example, using a frying pan as a bat to hit a ball.

Children's achievements are clearly linked to the stepping stones. Staff use on-going observations extremely well to plan the next steps in children's learning. Each child has a portfolio containing examples of their work, photographs and clear comments from staff to provide more detailed observations about a child's progress. The Foundation Stage entry profile gives a full evaluation under the six areas of learning to help identify any gaps in a child's progress. These are used to inform future planning.

Planning is detailed and covers all areas of learning comprehensively. This gives a clear picture of the aims and objectives of each activity and an evaluation ensures it is meeting the needs of all children. All staff are involved in one aspect or another of the planning which gives them ownership of the activities they develop for the children. Consequently staff are enthusiastic and take responsibility when presenting the activity to the children.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff enrich the experiences for all children with well planned activities. They have a good awareness of children's starting points and use this to plan the next steps in their development. A realistic balance has been created between adult-led and child-initiated play giving children tools to succeed in most given tasks. Staff are good communicators with the children, they know the children well and give attention to each child. Staff are excellent role models and inspire, praise and encourage children to try things for themselves. They

encourage children to gain the confidence to succeed and support them well as they aspire to do so. Children are progressing very well, supported by the staff's team confidence and secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They use a board range of teaching methods and understand how children learn and progress. Staff are enthusiastic and this impacts on the children's enjoyment and learning. Children are challenged in a positive way to increase their capabilities in most areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to a meaningful range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity. They take part in learning about the world around them through the celebration of festivals and events which are both familiar and unfamiliar to them. This helps them value those around them. Staff have very positive attitudes and present themselves as sensitive role models which in turn helps children relate to others and gain a secure understanding of the needs of others. All children are valued and respected as individuals and all their needs are well documented and implemented. Children thrive in an environment where they are engaged and nurtured free from any type of stereotyping. For example both genders use dressing up clothes freely and are home makers in the role play area. Staff recognise that at some time all children will exhibit a 'special need'. This could be a developmental need or personal need. Not all needs are educational and staff are clearly committed to supporting each and every child in order to meet their needs. All systems are in place to support any child with a learning difficulty or disability. Detailed pre-registration forms gain full information from parents about each child in order to fully meet their needs.

Children have a thoughtful understanding of the boundaries within the nursery and respond to direction from adults in a positive fashion. They eagerly respond to the consistent approach followed by all adults and this impacts clearly on their security and confidence as they know what is expected of them. For example not using the climbing frame when the red cones are in place unless a member of staff is present. Children develop high levels of self-esteem and are able to resolve differences and gain an understanding between right and wrong. This also has the effect of building their managing skills and self-reliance. Highly effective behaviour management defuses situations and distracts and engages children in worthwhile activities. Children share in the responsibility for their own behaviour as they learn to listen to others, share and wait turns and being kind to our friends. For example, if two children both want the same toy they are asked to take turns and an egg timer is used to help them understand that it will be their turn next. Staff are caring role models for the children, creating a calm, positive, fun and interesting environment in which they thrive. Staff have high expectations for all children and are consistent in their behaviour management.

The positive approach from staff fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. This contributes significantly to the

children's sense of belonging, security and well-being. Parents play an active role in their child's care and a two way sharing of information is encouraged with the use of daily report sheets. Parents also receive an informative booklet when their child starts at the nursery giving them full information about the care provided. Parents share information with staff about their child such as medical information, main language spoken at home and how children ask for the toilet and potty. Parents have opportunity to give their consent for their child to participate in all aspects of the nursery. For example walking to the outdoor play area, having photographs taken and the use of face paints. Staff are extremely approachable and friendly, making parents feel secure and at ease, confident with the care provided for their child. Parents are invited in for an informal discussion about their child's progress. However, not all parents are aware of this or receive information about their child's progress and achievements. Parents have access to information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, limited information is gained about the Foundation Stage to aid parents extend their child's learning at home. When dropping off and collecting, some parents are observed interacting with staff and positive comments are made about the care their children receive. Overall this impacts on the children's sense of security and confidence.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the sound quality of organisation. Leadership and management is good. The management team which consists of a manager, two supervisors and a deputy continually enhance their knowledge through extensive training and provide a thorough training program for all staff. The management team are responsible for all aspects of the nursery including staff supervision and employment, ratios and deployment, operational plan, staff training and qualifications. The nursery employs an administrator to support the manager with administrative tasks. All staff have a considerable knowledge of the National Standards which they are committed to applying throughout the nursery. This is enhanced with their knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage. High regard for the well-being of the children, their group sizes, adult support and well planned activities, contribute to children's enjoyment and achievements. The manager works closely with staff to implement any changes to legislation and has built a positive, motivated, and dedicated staff team. The organisation of staff across the nursery includes a sensitive mix between young and mature staff and enables them to share experiences and enrich and promote the care and experiences provided for the children.

Highly effective organisation of records and documents ensures children's welfare and enables parents to play an active role in their child's care. All staff are committed to the continuous evaluation and improvement of their practice. They regularly monitor and improve the quality of their care through comprehensive evaluations. A system is now in place to record any complaints and the action taken to resolve these with parents. A computerised system is used to record children's attendance. This clearly shows how many children are on the premises at any one time to enable staff to ensure ratios are met throughout the day. The manager works closely with the

committee to revise policies and procedures and implements the practice within the nursery.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Additional Services

The provision of additional services is a strength of the centre. Parents and the wider community are provided with support and a range of services and opportunities to develop their skills. The drop-in operates as a Parent and Toddler group for some, but also gives parents who do not have family support structures or who have reached some kind of crisis, support and guidance. This is an established and very well used service. The outreach facilities enables parents within the local community to enrol on training courses to help them develop skills to return to work, inform them about choices for childcare, or give them the opportunity to learn with their child. Many parents who use the outreach facilities are not able to attend the centre. Parents become used to familiar faces and more confident to use and access the centre's facilities. Through the centre's support parents become more aware of their own and their child's needs, which enhances the self-esteem of parents and has a positive impact on the care of their child. Health visitors, social services, oral health and dietetic services also provide help and support to parents through the centre's facilities. The dietician provides support to the centre staff on diet, teeth, exercise to help increase their awareness in working with the children.

New parents have been encouraged to use the centre's facilities through health visitors organising six monthly checks at the centre. Once introduced to the centre they have continued to attend and value the many benefits that the facility provides. The centre is very adult-friendly and is successful in encouraging parents and others from the surrounding area to successfully gain from using the services.

The centre also provides a mobile crèche service which can be booked in advance.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to consider improving the outdoor play area, use other methods of recording the number of children present, update their left child policy, and provide evidence of having seen identification documents. These have been completed satisfactorily. The outdoor play area has been refurbished with safety surface and brightly painted walls, a quick tally system using a laminated board has been introduced to record children present, the late collection policy states a specific time before the next step is taken and a tick list has been devised and completed for all staff members to ensure relevant documentation is seen.

The setting was also asked to raise staff awareness and use of mathematical language in everyday activities. This has been successfully achieved through in-house training. They were also asked to implement medium term plans and evaluations to enhance monitoring of the planned and delivered curriculum and ensure opportunities were provided for climbing and balancing and looking at living things. Medium term plans have been revised and evaluations improved. Topics for

children include living things such as growing cress and sunflowers and looking at and caring for African snails and butterflies. The climbing frame gives children some opportunity to climb and balance and a range of other equipment is in place to create different opportunities for children to improve these skills.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure good hygiene practices are constantly promoted - with regard to the hand washing facilities in the creative area and children's access to the mop and bucket
- update the child protection policy to be based on 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused - Summary' and the procedures to follow in the event of allegations being made against a member of staff.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- plan the environment to ensure resources are easily accessible and encourage children's skills and abilities to act spontaneously and work at their own pace. Also consider accessibility of the writing and mark making table and how this can be extended in the role play area
- develop a more formal system for parents to access their child's developmental records, gain an understanding of their progress and

achievements and provide information for parents about the Foundation Stage

- ensure all risks to children are assessed and minimised. This refers to safety in the sun in the outdoor area and developing children's understanding of emergency evacuation procedures.

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