



Aristo-Tots Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 219230 |
| Inspection date | 22 March 2006 |
| Inspector | Melanie Cullen |
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| Setting Address | 57 Goldington Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK40 3LH |
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| Telephone number | 01234 360500 |
| E-mail | amanda@aristotots.com |
| Registered person | Aristo-Tots Nursery |
| 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

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?

Aristo-Tots Nursery opened in 2001. It operates from a Victorian three storey building situated close to the town centre, in the Goldington area of Bedford. It serves Bedford and the wider neighbouring areas. A maximum of 76 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 19:00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 106 children aged from 6 weeks to 5 years on roll. Of these, 19

receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 17 staff. All the staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the Early Years and Childcare Partnership. The nursery promotes a Montessori influence within their educational ethos. During the inspection there were 54 children present.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff follow effective health and hygiene policies and procedures. Staff's practice is clearly reflected in the written procedures. For example, they are vigilant and swift when cleaning up after meals, snacks and messy activities. Tables are wiped before children sit down to eat and staff demonstrate good practice when changing nappies, they wear gloves and aprons which are changed between children and mats are wiped using antibacterial spray between each child. Children receive appropriate treatment following accidents because all staff hold suitable first aid qualifications. First aid boxes are accessible in each room and are well stocked. Accidents are recorded in detail and parents sign on the day the accident occurs.

Children begin to learn the importance of good personal hygiene. They clean their teeth after lunch and independently access tissues. They wash their hands after the toilet and before eating. However, children do not learn about germs through the daily routines. Although staff supervise children in the bathroom areas, children remain unaware of the reasons why they must wash their hands.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy a variety of nutritious foods which are freshly prepared in the setting. Children sit together in small groups to eat. Older children chose when they have a snack and drink and are encouraged to choose which fruit they want from a selection. However, younger children's independence skills are not promoted. For example, they do not learn to pour their own drinks and are only provided with forks to eat their lunch. Children resort to using their fingers which limits their developing skills to manage cutlery in both hands. Older children's independence skills are encouraged because they select their own cutlery and pour their own drinks. However, their skills are not further promoted because they do not serve themselves or have any choice of food at lunchtime. Children do not become thirsty during the day because they have access to drinking water, older children are encouraged to help themselves to a drink whenever they wish.

Children enjoy daily opportunities for outside, physical activity. They can run around and practise skills, such as climbing, swinging and balancing using the fixed equipment in the nursery garden. Children enjoy playing games which promote hand eye co-ordination, including throwing bean bags into boxes and have fun playing imaginative games in the raised cabin, play boat and slide. Children learn to

negotiate space steering themselves when running and on bikes around each other and equipment. They begin to learn about the effect of exercise and the weather on their bodies. For example, they talk about having cold faces and hot bodies and being out of breath after running. Children's development of large motor skills is promoted by the staff who are actively involved in the games, encouraging children to try new activities and demonstrating techniques. For example, they demonstrate the actions from 'We're going on a bear hunt' and encourage children to join in using their bodies. They bring Wellington boots to nursery to allow them to play outside in wet weather, splashing in puddles. Children benefit from a variety of opportunities to practise fine skills. For example, they learn to thread beads and cotton reels, use scissors, dress dolls and complete puzzles which promotes dexterity and co-ordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which is very well maintained and shows examples of children's work, displays of photographs and information for parents. Children stay safe because there are effective measures in place regarding people having access to the building. All parents and visitors are greeted at the door and visitors sign in and out. Children's safety is at the fore front, comprehensive risk assessments are in place and daily checks are made of the outside area which is very well appointed. The floor has been laid with safety surface of various densities. Children are protected from the sun by a large canvas sunshade permanently fixed in the garden. Children learn about safety through appropriate risk and challenge. They are encouraged to stretch themselves physically and to try new experiences while being carefully supported by staff who ensure the balance between risk and safety is maintained. Babies and young children are kept safe because written records are kept of the regular checks made by staff when they are sleeping. The daily records include details of food intake and nappy changes. Children's dietary and allergy information is displayed in the rooms, kitchen and milk kitchen which ensures they are given suitable meals and snacks.

Children enjoy using the wide range of play materials which are safe and suitable. They are provided with activities which are fun, interesting and offer appropriate challenge. Children are encouraged to select their own activities and play materials which are well organised and helps to develop emerging independence skills. Children begin to learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, staff explain and practise simple procedures such as emergency evacuation. Children learn the boundaries which are necessary to help them participate in their own and other people's safety. For example, they help to tidy toys away and pick them up from the floor which develops a sense of responsibility and respect for equipment.

Children's welfare is protected because all staff understand the importance of recording and reporting any child protection concerns. A named member of staff has responsibility for liaising with the local authority and developing training in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy attending the nursery, they are happy, settled and become engaged in a pleasing variety of fun activities which are appropriately challenging. Children benefit from the very positive, high quality interaction from the staff who smile and laugh with the children which promotes their development and self-confidence. Children enjoy singing and music. For example, staff use sock puppets and sing songs such as 'Two little dickie birds' which the babies respond to enthusiastically, laughing and clapping their hands. Children have a balance of activities throughout the day and feel secure with the daily routine which is flexible and takes account of children's individual needs. Staff have a working knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this has a positive impact on younger children's enjoyment and achievements. Staff plan activities in line with this framework and use observations to record children's development.

Nursery Education

Children are interested and motivated to learn, they eagerly take part in their self-selected activities. Children are engaged by the staff who encourage them to try new activities and to persist and complete activities such as puzzles. They concentrate on their chosen task because they enjoy it and are given sufficient support from staff. Children speak out in the large group with confidence and in small groups they ask for help as required and generally work well together. They begin to learn to manage their own feelings and use words rather than actions to deal with issues and disagreements which arise. Children help each other. For example, they assist friends to find their names at snack time, sweep up together and show their friends where to find certain items in the room. They begin to understand other's feelings, they say sorry, check their friends are alright and give comfort to friends. Children are confident to choose and tidy away their own play materials and begin to learn self-care. For example, they clean their teeth after lunch and put on their own coats and shoes.

Children are confident speakers. They ask questions of each other, staff and visitors. They interact well with each other and join in with stories and songs which are familiar. Children play complicated games which contain a wealth of speech and discussion about who is to take on which role and why. Children participate in games including describing a hidden object by colour, shape and giving clues for their friends to guess. Children benefit from the access they have to visual displays of letters, labelling and pictures which they refer to during activities. For example, a child describes an object being the same as a picture on the alphabet poster. They also talk about the weather and date. Children enjoy unlimited access to the library. They spontaneously access books and re-tell the stories. Some children can write their names and others form some letters correctly. Children's mark making skills are promoted because they have good opportunities to practise writing and they use a variety of writing materials.

Children have regular opportunities to practise counting during the session. For example, they count the number of children, how many cups are required and how

many wheels there are on vehicles. Children's learning is enhanced by the displays of numbers around the room. Most children can count to ten confidently. Children have experiences of simple calculation. For example, 'one for me and one for you, how many have we got?'. They use mathematical language during activities, such as bigger and smaller, inside, outside etc. Children begin to learn about capacity through activities, such as water and sand. They discuss shapes throughout the session. For example, 'it's round like the clock' and 'round like the orange'.

Children take part in various growing activities, they plant cress and seeds and talk about the need for water and light. They look at daffodils then make their own three dimensional model daffodils and draw them as still life subjects. Children are learning about nature, form and how things grow. Their learning is increased because of the extended activities. Children explore and investigate using mirrors and a magnifying glass to look at a spider and talk about its shape and the way it moves. Children enjoy construction, they use their imaginations and describe what they intend to build. For example, 'I'm going to make a rocket'. Children have regular opportunities for activities using calculators, key boards and tape players which encourages their technology awareness. Children talk about and recall events from the past both at nursery and in their home lives, they have been involved in various walks and outings around the local area. These activities have been extended through discussion about other countries, particularly those familiar to members of staff. They look for the location on a map of the world, talk about the differences and follow on with celebrations of festivals, such as Chinese New Year and St. Patrick's day. Children are learning about diversity, the local area and the wider world.

Children enjoy taking part in activities which allow them to express themselves freely. They explore sand, water, paint, seeds, pulses and play dough. They create pictures of winter skies following careful discussion with staff. A similar activity is done by drawing animals for a number display. Children enjoy music and regularly listen to various styles of music during the session. They have access to instruments, try them out and are shown how to use them efficiently. Children's work is displayed throughout the setting which promotes self-esteem and a sense of pride. Children enjoy role play and use the home corner and 'office' for complicated games. Children make good use of dressing up clothes, they learn how to put them on and take them off themselves and proceed to take part in various other activities while dressed up as a police officer, monkey and bear.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage which continues to develop. Regular written observations are completed of children participating in various activities which are recorded as notes and a formal, focused observation is recorded each half term. All the observations are linked to the relevant areas of learning which demonstrates the staff's awareness and understanding of what the children are doing. Staff are confident to change or extend activities as necessary and ask questions of the children which extends and promotes learning. For example, 'What did it change into?' and 'What do you think will happen?'. Children are set achievable tasks and receive praise and encouragement to try and persist at activities until they are complete. Staff know the children very well and effectively manage their individual needs. They make time to talk to them, explain if the child is unsure and always speak to the child on their level. This encourages children to feel valued and important. Children's assessment

records include the next steps for learning. However, individual learning plans which include information on which activities the staff will introduce to help the child achieve are only used for children who have special educational needs. Therefore, most children do not benefit from this system and does not demonstrate how staff will enable all children to reach their potential in learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show a clear sense of belonging. They are confident to approach staff for support when needed and to access their chosen activities. They are encouraged to try new experiences and to select their own play materials. Children begin to learn a sense of responsibility and help tidy toys away. Children are treated as individuals and with respect. They have access to a good range of resources which show positive images of people. Diversity is celebrated in the nursery through discussion, books and enjoying festivals. They look at a map of the world to find out where holidays are taken and where different festivals are celebrated. Children benefit from the staff's positive attitudes, they present themselves as sensitive role models and are willing to talk to children and to answer any questions they have about people who are different to themselves. All children are welcomed into the nursery and appropriate plans are made for children who have special needs. Children relate well to staff and their peers and begin to learn to understand the needs of others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered because staff make every effort to demonstrate to children the benefits of getting on with each other and the importance of respecting and celebrating everyone's differences.

Children behave well. They benefit from the gentle, fair approach from staff who liaise closely with parents to ensure consistency. Behaviour management issues are managed effectively and children respond to the appropriate strategies used, such as distraction, explanation and compromise. Children show care and concern for each other and generally play harmoniously together. They understand the boundaries and are familiar with the nursery routines which helps them to feel secure and have a sense of belonging and ownership.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff are welcoming and friendly and make every endeavour to build effective relationships. Parents receive daily verbal and often written feedback on their child's progress. Notice boards are available throughout the nursery which are regularly updated and include information about the nursery procedures, curriculum and various information on children's health. Parents receive regular newsletters which keep them informed about nursery events. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. They receive information about current topics and are invited to participate. Pre-school children have a library from which they can borrow books to take home to read with their parents. Parents are encouraged to use this facility because it re-enforces children's interest in books and promotes emerging reading skills and increases parents involvement.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the professional, organised approach from all staff. They are well protected and cared for by the team who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development and of managing each child's individual needs. The staff are committed to providing children with individual care and experiences which are fun and promote development. Children feel confident and secure because the staff are warm and positive towards them. They always have time to listen, are willing to become involved in children's play and offer suggestions to enhance the game while allowing the children to lead. Children benefit from the positive environment which is happy and productive.

The quality of the leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff are generally supported and continue to adhere to the setting's organisational plan. However, the staff's attendance records are not completed consistently. Ratios are maintained most of the time. However, children's safety is compromised on occasions when minimum ratios are not maintained. Regular team meetings are held to keep staff updated and management have frequent meetings with the staff in each nursery room to check current planning and activities. All staff receive induction and appraisals which help forward their professional development. The setting has robust systems in place to ensure the suitability of staff. Overall, the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to continue to develop the written policies and procedures, including written permission from parents for emergency medical treatment and that Ofsted's contact details are included in the complaints procedure. All written policies and procedures are up to date and contain all the required details. Children benefit because the staff's activity is clearly reflected in the written documents.

Complaints 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.

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint relating to National Standard 11. Concerns raised about the frequency of biting incidents and the staff's ability to manage children's behaviour. An unannounced visit was made on 18/08/2004 which resulted in two actions being raised under Standard 11. To devise an action plan which includes a named person for behaviour management and to ensure that all staff understand the behaviour management policy and are able to use various strategies in order to promote children's welfare and development. To ensure that all incidents are recorded. Both actions have been addressed satisfactorily and the

provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- Make sure that minimum staffing ratio's are maintained at all times and that staff attendance is recorded consistently
- make sure that children are provided with equipment and opportunities to further develop their independence skills

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):

- encourage children to learn about hygiene through the daily routine
- ensure that information gathered from children's development and assessment records is used to clearly identify and plan the next steps for individual children's learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk