



Leapfrog Day Nursery - Chelmsford

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	650090
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Registered person	Leapfrog Day Nurseries (Trading) Ltd
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Leapfrog Day Nursery Chelmsford is part of a national chain of settings under the ownership of Nord Anglia. It opened in 2000 and operates from a purpose built single storey unit in Chelmsford. A maximum of 99 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:00 to 19:00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 127 children aged from birth to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 47

children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and wider community. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 27 staff, 11 of these, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are 3 staff are working towards a qualification.

The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff overall follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures in the nursery to minimise the risk of cross infection. For example, staff use disposable gloves and aprons when serving food and clean tables with anti-bacterial spray before meals. Nappy changing procedures are appropriate and staff chat to the children as they are changed to make sure the children are comfortable and relaxed. The pre-school children wash their hands in the bathroom area after using the toilet and before meals. However, the younger children are provided with a shared bowl of water to wash their hands before meals and their hands are dried on a shared towel. This practice poses a risk of cross infection between the children. Staff do wash the younger children's faces after meals with individual face flannels.

Children are learning simple good health and hygiene practices through everyday routines. For example, the older children know where the tissues are and can blow their noses and dispose of the tissues in the bin. Children are also learning about healthy living when they look at pictures on the wall about healthy eating. The pre-school children talk about keeping their teeth clean and visiting the dentist when they work on topics such as, all about me.

Children are well nourished and are provided with fresh fruit and vegetables as part of their daily menu. Menus are planned by a nutritionist to ensure that they are balanced and appropriate for the children. Babies' milk feeds are provided by parents and carers. There is a comfortable rocking chair and sofas in which staff can feed babies in their arms and maintain close contact with the babies. Children enjoy meal times together. The babies enjoy a social mealtime with staff chatting with them as they eat. As the children get older, staff encourage the children's independence skills as they learn to feed themselves. The pre-school children are able to serve themselves from serving dishes at the tables. This encourages the children's fine motor skills and enables them to choose how much they would like to eat.

Children enjoy physical activity and benefit from fresh air daily in the garden. The babies are taken outside and can sit in buggies or on blankets in the shade. The toddlers enjoy running around and using a range of play equipment or taking part in activities such as, painting the floor with brushes and water. The older children

explore the garden eagerly. They climb and balance on the large climbing frame. They crawl into tents and dance around with ribbon sticks. Children's physical development is also promoted through indoor activities such as, tunnels, small climbing frames and playing ring games and dancing. All these opportunities help to promote the children's co-ordination and physical development.

Children are able to rest and sleep according to their needs because staff organise space and time to accommodate the children. Cots and sleep mats are cleaned regularly and fresh linen is used for individual children to prevent cross infection. In the younger age groups staff work closely with parents and carers to enable the children to sleep to their own routines rather than conforming to any set nursery routine. The older children have floor cushions and quiet areas when they can sit quietly and relax if they choose.

The children's emotional well-being is promoted well because staff are warm and affectionate and give the children lots of cuddles and hugs.

Children have their health and dietary needs met because staff work well with parents and carers. Allergies and medical conditions are recorded and all staff are made aware of these to ensure the children's needs are met. Appropriate systems are in place with regard to any illness in the nursery to reduce cross infection.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment. Security systems are robust and prevent any unauthorised access to the children and CCTV cameras are in place throughout the nursery. There is an effective and ongoing risk assessment in place to minimise any potential risks to children. Any areas identified for improvement are acted upon. For example, finger guards are being fitted to outside doors following recent concerns. Children are protected because staff are vigilant in ensuring the safety policies and procedures are followed.

The premises are overall bright and attractive and maintained to a safe standard to promote the children's safety. All children, parents and carers are warmly welcomed by staff. The space in the children's rooms is organised to provide a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment. Displays are used throughout the nursery to provide information or to show the children's artwork. These add colour and interest to the environment and show that the children's work is valued by the staff. However, some rooms have very few displays of the children's work or hands-on interactive displays for the children to investigate. For example, there no wall mirrors or mobiles in the baby room and only one display board in the pre-school room.

Children use suitable and safe equipment and furniture which conforms to safety standards. Cots and high chairs are maintained to ensure they remain safe for children to use. Toys and resources are safe and suitable for the developmental stages of the children. Children have easy access to an adequate range of toys and resources stored in low level units or in boxes and baskets. Children particularly enjoy using a range of natural material and household objects. For example, they

laugh as they watch shiny fabric being shaken by a member staff and enjoy making noises with biscuit tins and wooden spoons. The pre-school children become very involved in their imaginative play as they use real potato mashers, serving spoons and a wok as they cook for their pretend picnic.

Children are kept safe on outings because there are appropriate policies and procedures in place.

Children learn to keep themselves safe through the nursery routines and conversation with staff. They know that they should not run inside in case they bump into each other and that spilt water can cause them to slip. The younger children begin to learn the boundaries to keep themselves safe when staff gently talk to them during everyday opportunities. For example, as the babies roll around the floor a member of staff talks about moving things out of the way so they do not hurt themselves.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow to deal with any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled and overall spend their time purposefully at the nursery. They develop confidence and self-esteem because they are given appropriate praise and encouragement throughout the day and in response to everyday routines in the nursery. The babies' early language is encouraged because the staff talk enthusiastically back to them. Babies smile when they are rewarded for rolling and crawling with claps and smiles from staff. The toddlers are encouraged to make music with the instruments and become more confident as staff tell them well done and move to the children's beats. The two-year-olds happily help to tidy away toys and are rewarded with praise from the staff. All these measures help the children feel good about themselves and develops their confidence to try new and more challenging things.

Children show interest in what they do because they are provided with age appropriate toys and activities overall. Children benefit from planned activities in line with the 'birth to three matters' framework which promotes their development in all areas. The babies explore and investigate a range of brightly coloured toys and natural objects easily accessible to them on the floor and in baskets around the room. The toddlers investigate crazy foam and delight in the feel of it and have opportunities for other sensory experiences in the dedicated sensory room. The two-year-olds happily look at books with staff and learn new words and sounds. They enjoy dancing across a footsteps sound maker and laugh at the different sounds they make with their feet.

Children in the under three's unit are provided with a range of art and craft activities such as drawing and painting and some of these examples can be seen in displays. However, some of the art activities provided for the under three's are very adult-led and have a pre-determined outcome. For example, toddlers were given small cut out

cows to colour in with chalks. The children had some difficulty in doing this because they were using large chalks and the small paper cows kept slipping on the table. This particular activity did not foster the children's own creativity or provide good opportunities to develop their mark making skills. Evidence from displays and the children's portfolios shows that this kind of activity is common practice in the nursery.

Children form positive relationships with staff because the staff are interested in what the children say and do. Staff are warm and affectionate and support the children well in their emotional development. Good interaction between staff and children contributes to the children's enjoyment and learning. Staff talk to the children constantly about everyday things and what they see and what they do. These conversations help to develop the children's own language and their questioning skills.

Children's individual needs are met appropriately because staff take time to get to know the children. They make regular observations of what the children can do and use this information to help plan for the children's future development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All staff working with the funded nursery children have an understanding of the Foundation Stage and have recently attended training in this area. Although some of the less experienced staff's knowledge is less secure which limits their teaching, particularly with regard to using spontaneous opportunities effectively to promote the children's learning. All staff foster a good attitude to learning because they endeavour to make things interesting and fun and show that they are interested in the children and what they do. Children are very relaxed with the staff and enjoy sharing jokes and silly stories with them.

Staff make regular observations of the children and use this information to plan for the children's next steps during planning meetings. There is a newly devised system for recording the children's progress and staff have found this to be effective in helping them plan a suitable learning environment for the children. The staff are continuing to develop their planning systems so that they can manage this effectively to help the children make progress across all areas of learning. There are useful focussed activity planning sheets which clearly identify what and how the children can learn from the proposed activity. These are beneficial in that they provide clear guidelines for staff to enable them to help the children get the most out of these experiences. However, some activities and themes are less well thought through to ensure that they are well prepared and presented with appropriate supporting resources to enable children to extend their learning in all areas. For example, the hairdresser role play area did not provide many opportunities for children to use their literacy, mathematical and technology skills.

Children are provided with an appropriate balance of free play and adult-led activities which maintain their interest and enjoyment in their learning. The free play opportunities are planned to give the children a broad range of experiences where they can investigate, experiment and consolidate their own learning. For example, they write independently in the mark making corner and look at shells and pebbles through magnifying glasses. Children enjoy developing their own games and ideas in

the home corner or in the garden. Children eagerly participate in more adult-directed activities such as, food tasting and circle and story times.

Staff make good use of the environment, within the constraints of available display boards, to promote the children's learning. For example, a caterpillar number line encourages the children to point to and recognise numerals and pictures of buildings in the construction area helps children decide what shape their buildings will be.

Children's speaking and listening skills are developing appropriately. They enjoy listening and taking part in stories from books or those devised by staff. Children access books for themselves in the book area and contribute to creating their own group stories. Children talk confidently about themselves, their friends and families and what they are doing. The children recognise their own names when they put them on the registration board and some able children can write their own names. They develop pencil control when they write freely in the mark making area or when writing their own names on their work.

Children count confidently the number of children in the tent or how many cubes they have. Some children are able to count and then find the correct numeral and can recognise significant numbers such, as how old they are. Some of the more able children are beginning to solve simple number problems such as, how many plates are needed to finish laying the table. Children easily recognise shapes and know the number of sides and corners a shape has. They are learning about size, volume and weight when they play in the sand and water and use scales.

Children have good opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider and natural world when they investigate a range of materials and resources. For example, they see the changes in wet and dry pasta and notice how the wind blows the ribbon sticks and that the sun melts ice. They grow seeds and plants and notice how they grow because they water them and put them in the sun. Children learn about life cycles of different animals and plants and learn about time when then talk about themselves and the progression of the day. They learn about different cultures when they visit a Hindu temple and celebrate Diwali. Children's understanding of technology is well promoted because they have daily access to a computer where they enjoy using learning programmes or making pictures.

Children have planned activities to develop their physical skills as well as through their own initiated play. Their fine motor skills are promoted through a range of activities such as, mark making, threading, cutting and sticking.

Children enthusiastically use instruments to make their own music and listen to a variety of different music such as, classical to develop their appreciation of a wider range of music. Children devise their own imaginative play in the home corner and have opportunities to learn about the wider world through planned role play scenarios such as, shops and doctors. Children are able to vocalise their feelings and express their ideas through everyday opportunities and experiences and are encouraged to talk freely about these. Children enjoy craft and art activities where they explore a range of materials and resources.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a sense of belonging to the nursery and are secure and settled. There are systems in place to enable children and parents and carers to become used to the nursery life and routines. Children are able to visit the nursery before they start and staff promote open communication with parents and carers at these initial visits. Children's needs are met because staff and parents and carers share information about the child's needs, likes and dislikes. This enables staff to care for the children with consistency. As a consequence, the babies and young children are happy and confident to be left by their parents or carers and they form good relationships with the staff. As the children get older their sense of belonging is fostered by activities such as, putting their own names on the registration board when they arrive.

Children learn about responsible behaviour during their time at nursery. From very early on, the younger children are encouraged to share and take turns and to be nice to each other. As the children get older staff use age appropriate explanation to help the children understand right from wrong and how our actions make others feel. As a consequence, children behave well and they are polite and helpful. For example, the pre-school children help to fill the water tray and sweep the sand from the floor. Children work harmoniously with others and form good relationships with their peers and the adults in the nursery. The pre-school children have devised a set of 'rules' and have made a display to show this. The children are seen to refer to these rules when negotiating with others. This demonstrates that the children have a good understanding of what is and is not acceptable behaviour.

Children are provided with both adult-led and child initiated play so that they can make choices and make decisions around the routines of nursery life. Children are also provided with low level storage for toys so that they can investigate and choose for themselves what they would like to do. This encourages the children's independence and decision making skills. The older children have more choices as appropriate to their development because they can understand personal responsibility. For example, they can choose to play inside or out. Staff encourage children's decision making when they ask them if they would like another story to go and play.

Children develop good self-esteem because their efforts and accomplishments are rewarded with lots of praise and encouragement. Children are learning to respect others when they talk about sharing and taking turns. The older children listen attentively to others when they are sharing news and ideas. They are also learning to care for others and living things when they look after the fish and grow plants.

There are appropriate systems in place to support children with special needs and a qualified co-ordinator supports other staff in the nursery to implement these systems. Policies and procedures are in place for the inclusion of all children.

Children become aware of wider society when they celebrate both traditional and world festivals. Children see some images and resources that reflect diversity in some parts of the nursery. However, overall this is limited and children have few

opportunities to learn about our differences and similarities through everyday opportunities.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered overall.

All staff work well with parents and carers and there are good relationships between them. There is an informative prospectus for all new parents and carers and all policies and procedures are readily available. The nursery reception area is well stocked with current information about the nursery and newsletters go home regularly. Throughout the nursery there is more information such as, wipe boards informing parents and carers what was on the menu today and displays about weaning young babies. Parents and carers of children under two years are informed about their child's day and routine through a daily record system. Parents and carers views are sought through questionnaires and a suggestion box.

The partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is good. Parents and carers

attend open evenings where staff discuss the Foundation Stage and how it is implemented in the pre-school. Curriculum planning is displayed and planned topics and learning themes are included in the regular newsletters. Children's portfolio records are sent home so that parents and carers can see the children's progress and are able to make comments on these. Children's learning is further promoted because staff send home 'learning at home' sheets to encourage children and parents and carers to continue learning themes out of the nursery. Parents and carers are welcomed into the pre-school to read with the children or to share their experiences. For example, a dietician parent came to talk to the children about healthy eating. All these systems promote an effective relationship with parents and carers and subsequently enhances the children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff who are suitable to do so. There is an induction programme in place for staff to ensure they are aware of the working practices in the nursery to support the children's care and education. The nursery operate with the required level of suitably qualified staff. This ensures that staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge of child development to promote the children's welfare and learning. Ongoing training is available to staff to ensure their skills and knowledge are updated and relevant to current practice and information to continue to meet the needs of the children in the nursery. All staff have a high regard for the well-being of all the children.

The adult to child ratio supports children's care, learning and play and is maintained through breaks and staff absences by use of cover staff and, if necessary, the nursery use agency staff. For example, in the under three's unit there are additional staff to work in the separate rooms to help when other staff are out of the room changing nappies. Children are well supervised and group sizes and staff deployment contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement

and ability to take an active part in the setting.

The key worker system operates well and enables children to be settled into nursery life well and to have a consistent person to carry out their care needs. This system also enables parents and carers to have a delegated member of staff as a point of contact.

There is a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place which underpin the working practice in the nursery. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of these and implement them during the daily routines and running of the nursery. Documentation is maintained appropriately to ensure that children's needs are met and their welfare is promoted.

There is an appropriate staff monitoring system within the nursery to ensure that working practices are appropriate for the needs of the all the children. Staff appraisals identify any training needs to further promote staff's skills and knowledge across the nursery. Whole nursery and base room meetings are held to discuss nursery issues and ongoing development.

Leadership and management with regard to funded nursery education is satisfactory. The pre-school staff have regular meetings to discuss the educational needs of the children and to plan and prepare for the children's next steps. They have additional support systems within the company to draw on to help them implement and progress their own development plan. These measures contribute to the children's satisfactory progress.

Overall the needs of the range of children attending are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection the nursery were asked to review the planning and provision for a suitable and age appropriate range of resources and experiences to promote the children's development and to review the organisation of nappy changing procedures.

Following the last inspection the management team and staff initially carried out a thorough review of the actions set and all the other issues raised in the inspection report. They systematically drew up an improvement plan and have identified what they have done to improve their practice over the period of time since the last inspection.

With regard to the actions set, they have reviewed the range of play equipment and resources available to the children and have supplemented these with additional purchased equipment and creatively use a range of household and natural items and objects. Staff have attended training in 'treasure baskets' and heuristic play to enable them to more effectively identify the benefits of such play and activity. They use regular observation of the children's progress to help them plan and use the

extended range of equipment to further promote the children's learning and enjoyment. Subsequently, the children experience a wider range of activities to develop their senses and intellectual capabilities.

Nappy changing procedures are outlined in the appropriate company policies and procedures and these are implemented in practice. Since the last inspection, an additional member of staff is available in the under three's unit. This ensures that when staff have to leave the base rooms to change nappies this additional member of staff can cover so that staff ratios are maintained at all times.

All these measures have ensured the quality of care is now of a satisfactory standard throughout the nursery.

Nursery Education.

At the last inspection the quality of nursery education was judged as inadequate. The setting was required to improve the organisation and deployment of staff and time to ensure that children did not have to wait around for activities and meal times. There has been a thorough review of the planning and set up of the pre-school unit. A number of actions have been taken to ensure that the time spent in the nursery is productive for the children. For example, children have access to an open snack bar where they can choose when to have their snacks and do not have to wait for this to be organised. Children are encouraged to help prepare for dinner when they lay the table which encourages both independence and social skills. Grouping of children at story time has ensured that the activity can be directed to an age appropriate audience so that all children can contribute more effectively to these small group sessions.

The nursery were also asked to ensure children's progress records are regularly updated to help plan for the children's next steps. There is now a new system of recording the children's progress which clearly shows what the children can do and what the next steps in their learning is. This enables staff to plan more effectively to ensure children make ongoing progress in all areas of their learning.

The nursery was also required to ensure that children have access to a wide range of equipment and play materials in sufficient quantities to encourage development in all areas, including mark making, creative, technology and physical development. As previously outlined in this report, children now have access to a wide range of equipment and experiences to promote their learning. This is because there has been a review of the curriculum planning and staff have identified and acted upon areas of weakness. Staff have made significant changes to the layout of the room and have created areas for particular learning outcomes such as, mark making, maths, science and interest tables. Children freely use the writing area and write letters, their names and practise their emergent mark marking skills. They use the magnifying glasses to make words look bigger. Children enjoy activities such as, cutting and sticking, painting and drawing. They use the computer daily and have access to other simple technology equipment. The children develop their fine motor skills when they use tools and small objects and thread laces.

As a consequence of all the above actions, the quality of nursery education for

funded children is now of a satisfactory standard.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been two complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

In December 2005 Ofsted received a complaint which raised concerns regarding the suitability and organisation of food provision to children under the age of 2 years and the cleanliness of the floor.

Ofsted childcare inspectors conducted an unannounced visit on the 20 December 2005 to investigate these concerns in relation to National Standards 4: Premises, National Standard 8: Food and Drink, National Standard 9: Equal Opportunities and National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers.

As a result of the investigation the provider was given an action to improve and a recommendation to improve working practise in relation to the complaint. During the visit the inspector also found evidence to suggest National Standard 2: Organisation was not being met and a further two actions to improve practise were given.

A satisfactory response to the actions was received. The provider remains qualified for registration.

On the 10th February 2006 Ofsted received a concern regarding the type food being given to babies. Ofsted investigated these concerns by carrying out an unannounced visit on the 17 February 2006 to investigate under National Standard 8: Food and drink. Evidence seen at the provision at the time of the visit showed that the food being given to all children was of good standard and nutritious and the provider was meeting the National Standard. To improve this service further an action was given to ensure daily records are kept of babies' food intake for parents and carers.

A satisfactory response to the action was received. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- review the children's hand washing practice in the under three's rooms to ensure the risk of cross infection is minimised
- improve the welcoming environment further to make it more interactive for the children and to show that the children's own artwork is valued by staff
- plan and provide suitable activities and resources to enable the children aged from 0-3 years to develop and explore their own creative skills
- develop the range of resources which reflect diversity further to promote children's understanding of our differences and similarities

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):

- develop staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage further to enable them to use both planned and spontaneous opportunities to promote the children's learning more effectively
- develop the curriculum planning further to ensure that it provides a broad and rich learning experience to promote children's progress across all the six areas of learning

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