



Princess Christian Day Nursery - Colchester

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289579
Inspection date	29 March 2006
Inspector	Nicola Mary Eileen Matthews
Setting Address	Phoenix Square, Severalls Industrial Park, Wyncolls Road, Colchester, Essex, CO4 9PB
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Registered person	Leapfrog Day Nurseries Limited
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?

Princess Christian Nursery, Colchester opened in 2002 and became part of the Leapfrog chain of nurseries in 2004. It operates from premises that have been purpose built within a business park in north Colchester. The group serves a large area.

There are currently 106 children from birth to 8 years on roll. This includes 38 children in receipt of free nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

Sessions are from 07:30 until 18:00 Mondays to Fridays. The nursery opens 5 days a week all year round. The setting supports children with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language.

There are 19 staff working with the children.

Over half the staff have appropriate early years qualifications including the 2 managers. There are 3 members of staff working towards a recognised early years qualification and 1 of the managers is working towards a higher early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment where some good procedures prevent cross-infection. For example, staff wear plastic gloves and aprons when changing nappies. However, staff do not always ensure the nappy changing surface is cleaned thoroughly after use. Children wash their hands after toileting and before meals. They are not so sure of the routine to follow when a snack bar is organised as some children start eating before they wash their hands which compromises their health.

Children are protected from infectious illness through the documentation of a clear policy and procedure to follow in the event someone is ill. They are cared for appropriately during emergency medical situations because staff have completed first aid training.

Children are given healthy nutritious foods. They have gravy poured on their cooked lunch to moisten the food to make it more palatable, therefore enjoyable. Children's individual dietary requirements are very well documented, the documentation is attached to each areas meal trolleys. Therefore, all staff can make themselves aware of individual special diets and maintain the children's health.

Children's emotional well-being is supported through the key worker system. They use staff as a secure base when looking for reassurance as a stranger enters the room. Children have an effective introduction to the next room, as they move through the nursery, by conducting frequent visits. Their home routines and individual needs are updated as they move to the next stage which ensures they are well cared for. All children are confident to be left in the setting and comfortable with the routines.

The younger children are able to practise new skills in a safe environment for example, pulling themselves up into the standing position and walking. All children enjoy physical activity; the 18 months to 2-year-olds laugh and show good levels of enjoyment in the soft play room when the weather is inclement and they cannot get outdoors. Older children enjoy running around the outdoors expertly negotiating the space and manoeuvring around each other to prevent colliding as they run away from 'Mr. Wolf'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and well-maintained environment which fosters their self-esteem. Their security is effectively maintained as staff closely monitor people entering the building throughout the day. Children are only collected by the nominated persons as the system in place of photographs and passwords effectively stops them from being collected by those not named. Children's ongoing safety is promoted through a thorough risk assessment which identifies hazards which are then minimised.

Children use a range of good quality play resources and clean and safe equipment to support their care needs. For example, there are ample cots should all the babies want to sleep at the same time. Their bed linen is stored in a clearly labelled bag, with the child's name, and attached to the mattress. Children sleeping on the floor mattresses have their safety maintained by staff who supervise those still walking about. All children sleeping are monitored closely to ensure their safety.

Children's welfare is maintained well through the staff's awareness of the clear policies and procedures in place for the nursery and the signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff are reminded about protecting children by a sign in each room telling them of their duty to pass on any concerns about children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to feel settled and confident by the warm and welcoming environment. They have a good sense of belonging which has developed through environmental factors such as named coat pegs and a well paced routine throughout the day which meets their individual needs. The younger children are able to independently choose activities from the low-level shelving. They enjoy listening to stories and engaging in messy play showing enthusiasm in painting and exploring sand with their fingers and toes. Children use mark making implements, such as paint brushes and crayons to make marks on paper. Children handle books from a very early age and enjoy listening to stories and participating in songs and rhymes with actions.

Babies enjoy close contact with the adults and explore their environment using their senses as they handle objects and manipulate simple pop up toys, knobs, levers and wheels. They have room to safely crawl and develop their walking skills as they pull themselves up using the equipment around the room.

All children are becoming competent communicators. The babies enjoy a reciprocal relationship with the adults and they willingly engage in simple conversations. Older children sustain a conversation well maintaining the subject and allowing each person time to communicate effectively.

Nursery Education

Children are making good progress towards most of the early learning goals. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from a variety of teaching methods which are used, such as a good balance of activities that are child initiated and adult directed. Children's interest is sustained for most of the time. For example, when making Mother's Day cards and boxes for heart shaped biscuits. Their learning is supported by staff who use some resources creatively for example, the fine sand tray to write letters in their name and make patterns to develop children's early literacy skills. However, some focused activities that are introduced by the staff lack imagination and effective use of resources, which results in missed opportunities for children to independently practise and consolidate new skills learnt and extend their understanding. For example, the recording of seeds growing was a new concept for several children. They had no resources to help them remember the sequence of planting and growing. Children are not able to follow opportunities outdoors, during the winter months, that support all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Children's assessment records are clearly set out using the stepping stones leading to the early learning goals. They are observed weekly as they participate in focused activities, organised by their key worker. This information is used to inform the assessment records.

Children's writing for a purpose is supported well and they show enjoyment in writing labels for the phonic display board for the letter 'z' such as, zoo and zebra. Children carefully and appropriately handle books and they enjoy listening to stories in a group and talking about their favourite ones. For example, 'this is about Santa, ho, ho, ho'. Children who come from dual language families are supported well by staff who have learnt some key words to help understand the children.

Children are developing their numeracy skills well as they enjoy taking turns and counting during games such as, Snakes and Ladders. They are developing awareness of time as they excitedly play, What's the time Mr Wolf. Children confidently use positional language such as up the ladder and down the snake and you are after me and I am before you. They accurately count to 10 and are secure in the numbers up to 5 as they instantly recognise 5 spots on a dice and use their fingers to represent number. Children are not learning about metric measurement as they work in imperial weights when cooking. They show pride at completing jigsaws, manipulating the pieces to fit in the correct position. Children confidently name simple shapes.

Children explore and experiment with the resources available. They are starting to participate in activities that reflect the rhythm of life, such as planting seeds. Children are learning about their own culture and others by participating in art and craft activities linked to celebrations such as Mother's Day. They are learning about their local community as they visit the park and library and travel by public transport to get there. Children use construction resources to design objects such as spectacles and people. They confidently talk about their families and know they have older brothers and sisters. There are a few positive images in the resources of a multicultural society but none in the wall displays.

Children have a good awareness of space as they freely manoeuvre around the play areas and sit in large groups on the carpet. They delight in running away from 'Mr

Wolf' in the garden, skilfully avoiding each other. Children are developing very good hand to eye coordination as they manipulate the objects during play such as the train track, and jigsaw puzzle pieces. The more able children very accurately and safely use scissors. They have limited opportunities to use large equipment to provide a challenge in their development of large muscle control.

Children sustain interest and concentration when exploring paint at the easel. They use resources creatively in the sand, filling up tip-up trucks and carting the sand to another part of the table top. Children use language articulately in their imaginative play to negotiate who will be the librarian, and enjoy taking part in the adult organised role play in the library giving out tickets and encouraging the borrower to choose a book. They handle and make sounds with a variety of percussion type musical instruments exploring pitch and tone.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing some awareness of others as they discuss each others hairstyle and participate in art activities like drawing themselves, which is displayed on the cupboard doors. However, they have very limited opportunities to see positive images of a multicultural society in the wall displays. They are learning to look at other's religions by comparing places of worship for example, a Christian church and a Muslim mosque. All children have a good sense of belonging as they follow the accepted routines and are acknowledged as individuals through the key worker system and the caring relationship they have built up with the staff.

Children are given a lot of independence in their personal care and at meal times where they are encouraged to feed themselves. They take some responsibility for tidying up, even the younger ones, which encourages them to take care of their environment.

Children with special educational needs are supported well. There is a nominated member of staff to ensure they have their needs met and can progress in their development using the policy and procedure in place which takes account of the Code of Practice 2001. Children's parents can read a display on the wall, in the entrance area, which is very informative and will encourage them to take an active part in helping their child to progress.

All children's behaviour is very good. They are praised and encouraged to behave in acceptable ways through staff using sensitive explanation. Children are becoming socially competent as they learn to say please and thank you. Children share and take turns amicably and enjoy each others company. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. As children are brought into the nursery parents see and can read a lot of informative posters and leaflets. Children's 'day' is effectively communicated to the parents of the younger ones, by the use of a daily diary sheet which records their sleeping and feeding routines. Older children's assessment records are formally shared twice a year for those parents who wish to

make an appointment. Their children's records can also be accessed at any time throughout the year. Staff organise an annual informative evening for parents about the curriculum. For example, an evening about messy play which enables parents to develop an understanding of what their children are learning and why, and to implement some of these ideas at home to take an active interest in their children's early education.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's health, welfare and well-being are promoted by the implementation of clear and well written policies and procedures. They benefit from robust procedures for employing staff to ensure those working with the children are suitable and safe to do so. Children benefit from a highly qualified staffing team which ensures children's needs are met as they have good underpinning knowledge of child development.

The leadership and management is good. Monitoring of the educational programme is regularly carried out by the two managers who identify any omissions and highlight this to the staff who then include this in their future planning. This helps to ensure all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum are covered over a period of time. For example, management identified that equipment to support children's exploration and investigation was limited so more equipment was purchased. However, monitoring of the assessment records and some focused activities to ensure key workers are enabling children to progress and make links in their learning is limited.

Staff complete an annual appraisal where their strengths and areas for improvement are identified. Management encourage individual staff members to improve their skills such as, talking to parents using role play scenarios during team meetings. This enables each member of staff to improve their skills and self-esteem as they gain approval from management, which results in children being cared for by motivated staff who work well as a team. Overall the range of the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable for care.

At the last inspection for nursery education the provider was asked to consider using the observations of the children to inform future planning and to give more emphasis to visual displays of cultural artefacts to enhance children's learning.

Very little progress has been made to develop visual displays of cultural artefacts to enhance the children's learning. Some individual assessment records are not completed regularly to inform future planning. However, staff organise key worker group activities where individual children's progress is monitored through observations and they talk about individual children's next step during the day.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 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.

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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 followed at all times, this refers to hand washing and nappy changing routines
- develop the visual displays to include positive images of a multicultural society.

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):

- ensure all activities, especially adult focused ones, are well planned and engage all children in the learning process by providing appropriate resources to support their development in all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum
- develop the outdoors to provide children with opportunities to progress in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum all year round.

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