



Leapfrog Day Nursery - Swindon, St Andrew's Ridge

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109121
Inspection date	12 September 2006
Inspector	Karen Louise Prager
Setting Address	Highdown Way, St Andrews Ridge, Swindon, Wilts, SN25 4YD
Telephone number	01793 726919
E-mail	
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 at St. Andrew's Ridge, Swindon opened in 2000. It operates from purpose built premises to the north of the town. There is a secure garden for outside play. Children attend from a wide area.

There are currently 156 children, from birth to under five years, on roll. This includes 43 funded three-year-olds and one funded four-year-old. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07.00 until 19.00.

Eight part-time and 24 full-time staff work with the children. Eighteen staff have early years qualifications. Five staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives teacher support from the Sure Start Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment where some good procedures prevent cross-infection. For example, practitioners wear plastic gloves and aprons when changing nappies. Children are familiar with the routine to wash their hands after toileting and before meals, though this is not consistently followed or monitored by staff. 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 practitioners have completed first aid training.

Children are given, and eat, generous portions of healthy nutritious foods. Children's individual dietary requirements are very well documented; the documentation is attached to each area's meal trolleys. Therefore, all practitioners can make themselves aware of individual special diets and maintain the children's health.

A key worker system is in place, which is able to support children's emotional needs, and 'together time' offers the youngest children opportunities to spend individual time with their individual key worker. 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. The majority of children are confident to be left in the setting and are 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 babies enjoy time spent in the sensory room and older children enjoy developing their skills in the outdoor play area. However, the use of the area offers insufficiently broad experiences as planning for this is minimal. A climbing structure with slides provides daily opportunities for children to develop their steadiness and to negotiate steps.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and well-maintained environment. Overall, the nursery is bright and welcoming with posters and children's art work displayed throughout. Security is effectively maintained as nursery staff closely monitor people entering the building throughout the day, and there is a secure key pad system for entry to the building. 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.

The environment is organised so that children are encouraged to develop independence, with child sized toilets and hand basins and coat hooks. Children are able to move freely within the room. Older children are able to freely access equipment in easily accessed storage units. Younger children have less opportunity to freely select as activities are selected by the practitioners. Some resources are shared between rooms, which offers increased variety for the children. However, resources chosen are not consistently age appropriate. Child sized tables and chairs meet the needs of the children and facilitate the children sitting together for lunch and other group times. Space for comfortable rest throughout the day is insufficient throughout the nursery.

Children use a range of clean and safe play resources and equipment to support their care needs. The babies' bed linen is stored in a clearly labelled bag, with the child's name. Children sleeping on the floor mattresses have their safety maintained by practitioners who supervise those still walking about. All children sleeping are monitored closely to ensure their safety.

Children's welfare is maintained well through the practitioner's awareness of the clear policies and procedures in place for the nursery, and the signs and symptoms of abuse. Practitioners are regularly reminded about protecting children through training and discussion at practitioner meetings.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are encouraged to feel settled and confident by the warm and welcoming environment. They have an increasing sense of belonging which has developed through environmental factors, such as individual coat pegs and a generally well paced routine throughout the day, which meets their individual needs. The younger children have limited opportunities to independently choose activities from the low-level shelving. They enjoy singing songs and engaging in messy play, such as playing in the water or doing observational paintings. Children use mark making implements, such as paint brushes and crayons, to make marks on paper. Children handle books from an early age and enjoy listening to stories and participating in songs and rhymes with actions.

Babies enjoy times of 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. Children are becoming increasingly competent communicators. The babies enjoy a shared relationship with the adults at times during the day, when they willingly engage in simple conversations, though staff do not make sufficient use of their contact with the children. Older children sustain a conversation well, maintaining the subject and allowing each person time to communicate effectively. Observations and assessments of children's developments are in place, though this is not used to inform planning.

Nursery Education

Children are making steady progress towards most of the early learning goals. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children benefit from a limited range of teaching methods

which are used. Children's interest is sustained at periods throughout the day, such as when making pizzas and when playing with the fashion dolls. However, practitioner's knowledge of how children learn is limited and, as a result, strategies do not always offer challenges and interest for the children; for example, the majority of activities are adult selected. Their learning is supported by staff who use some resources creatively; for example, flour in a 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, such as the use of the puppets to demonstrate the concept of sharing, at story time.

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, though not consistently to inform future plans. Children form good relationships with staff and peers. They develop a good level of independent self-care skills, which is instrumental in assisting their self-confidence.

Children's writing for a purpose is adequately supported and they demonstrate enjoyment in showing their awareness that print carries meaning. Many labels and posters around the nursery support this. Children handle books frequently and they enjoy listening to stories in a group, for example, Handa's Hen. Children who come from dual language families are supported less well by staff, who have not learnt key words to help support the children.

Children are developing their numeracy skills well, as they enjoy taking turns and counting during group times. They are developing awareness of time as they become aware of the rhythm of the day. Children confidently use positional language, such when playing inside and outside the tent. They are generally secure in the numbers up to 5, as they instantly recognise spots on the dominoes and use their fingers to represent number. They show pride when building with construction toys, manipulating the pieces to fit in the correct position. Children confidently name simple shapes.

Children explore and experiment with the resources available. They show interest in the world in which they live, for example, observing some snails or discovering the cats in the outdoor area. Children are learning about wider world by participating in art and craft activities linked to celebrations. They are starting to learn about their local community as they have occasional visitors such as the vet, though do not themselves go out on local visits. Children use construction resources to build with a purpose, for example, using junk boxes to construct the Leaning Tower of Pisa. They confidently talk about their families and the television programmes they have watched. There are a few positive images in the resources of our multicultural society.

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 around the outdoor play area, skilfully avoiding each other. Children are developing very good hand to eye coordination as they manipulate the objects during play such as the Lego, and sorting small objects. The more able children very accurately and safely use scissors. They have limited opportunities to build with large equipment to provide a challenge in their development of large muscle control.

Children sustain interest and concentration when exploring the texture of wheat flakes in the tray or choosing toppings for their pizza. Children use language articulately in their imaginative play, for example, as they role play with dinosaurs or play in the home corner. 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 satisfactory.

Children are developing some awareness of others as they assist at meal times, and of themselves when looking in the mirrors. They are learning to look at others' lives through themed activities. For example, when learning about Italy children were able to make pizzas. However, they have very limited opportunities to learn first hand about their local community. 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 whole staff team. Children are given a lot of independence in their personal care and at meal times, when 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 from leaflets and displays throughout the nursery, which are very informative and can 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 other's company. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. 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 and activities participated in. 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.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's health, welfare and well-being are promoted by the implementation of clear and well written policies and procedures. They benefit from clear procedures for employing staff to ensure those working with the children are suitable and safe to do so. Induction procedures are in place, though not put into practice for temporary staff members. Children benefit from a well qualified staff team, though their knowledge of child development is not always implemented, for example the recognition that babies learn through direct experience and the need to talk with children about what they are doing. A key worker system is in place, though continuity of care is not always managed to ensure children's needs are met. The organisation of the day generally meets the children's needs as they have times to play and to rest. However,

the organisation of the mealtimes is poor, resulting in children sitting for extended periods of time whilst waiting for their food.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager is appropriately qualified and experienced in childcare. Monitoring of the educational programme is regularly carried out by the room supervisor, who identifies any omissions, and planning is adjusted. This helps to ensure all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum are covered over a period of time. For example, management identified that outdoor play was limited, so training was undertaken and additional equipment was purchased. However, monitoring of the assessment records and some of the focused activities to ensure key workers are enabling children to progress and make links in their learning is not consistently in place.

Staff complete an annual appraisal where their strengths and areas for improvement are identified. Management encourage individual staff members to improve their skills, and periodically monitor this throughout the year. This enables each member of staff to gradually 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 provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom care is provided.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last care inspection the provider was given a number of recommendations, to help improve the organisation, training and resources of the provision.

The organisation of staff has improved, to ensure that the required ratio of staff members working with the children is maintained. Mealtimes have been improved to ensure that all the children's dietary needs are met. However, the general organisation of the staff and children's time remains an area for further improvement.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator's knowledge of her role and responsibilities has increased, and there is now a good level of support for children with additional need.

The range and use of multi-cultural resources has been improved across the nursery and the nursery now offers an easily accessible and safe area for staff to change the nappies for this age group. These improvements have had a positive impact on the care offered to children.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection for nursery education the provider was asked to improve the programme for assessment, plan and provide practical activities in several areas of learning, and to monitor and evaluate planning and weaknesses regularly.

Activities for children have been extended to provide increased practical opportunities to promote children's understanding of calculation, knowledge of how to form letters correctly and to develop their awareness of music and creativity.

Weekly observations and assessments are now undertaken, though they are not sufficiently used to inform planning and provide sufficiently appropriate and challenging activities. This remains an area to develop further.

Leadership and management of the provision now regularly identifies areas to be improved and planning is reviewed, though the effectiveness of the educational provision for individual learning is not monitored.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 1 2004, Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 2: Organisation and Standard 8: Food and Drink. This involved an allegation made about the failure to adhere to staffing ratios and that children are given food that they are not allowed, for religious and health reasons. An unannounced visit was made on 05 July 2005 and ten actions were set to ensure that National Standards were being met. A Notice of failure to comply with regulations was also issued to ensure that required staffing ratios are adhered to at all times. We re-visited the Nursery and found that regulations were being adhered to.

Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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):

- continue to improve the organisation of the meal times to ensure children are not sitting for extended periods of time
- ensure staff are effectively engaged with the children to fully support their care and learning needs
- develop the use of the indoor and outdoor space to provide a greater variety of play opportunities for children

- use the record of children's progress to plan the next steps of their development to ensure that experiences are appropriate to their individual stages of development (also applies to Nursery Education)

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):

- extend and implement staff knowledge of child development in respect to how children learn
- extend the strategies used in learning and teaching to provide enhanced challenges and interest for the children
- extend opportunities for children to expand their knowledge of where they live and the natural world

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk