



## Leapfrog Day Nursery - Quedgeley

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101805
<b>Inspection date</b>	29 November 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Shirley Ann Jackson
<b>Setting Address</b>	Merlin Drive, Quedgeley, Gloucestershire, GL2 4NJ
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<b>Registered person</b>	Leapfrog Day Nurseries (Trading) Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 opened in 1999. The nursery, one of a chain of large purpose built nurseries operating nationally, is located in Quedgeley on the outskirts of Gloucester. The nursery is situated in a mainly residential area and supports the local and wider communities.

There are currently 102 children aged five months to four years on roll. This includes 25 children receiving nursery education funding. 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. Holiday Club is offered to school age-children during school holidays.

20 full and part-time staff work with the children. Over half of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children see staff take positive steps to maintain a clean environment, for example, they clean tables and chairs after meals and mop up drink spillages. Children's health is supported as staff have clear procedures in place for dealing with accidents and administering medication. However, the risk of cross-infection is not minimised as staff do not always respond promptly to runny noses and dummies from the floor are sometimes put in babies mouths by staff. Children who are ill are well-cared for. A number of staff hold current first aid certificates and first aid boxes are readily accessible. Children's sleep patterns are followed at nursery, promoting their well-being.

Children are offered a healthy and balanced choice of meals and snacks. Meals are freshly prepared on site by the nursery cook. All food offered takes into account children's dietary requirements and parent's wishes. Clear procedures are in place to ensure that all staff are aware of children's particular dietary needs, ensuring their well-being. Toddlers and pre-school children learn to serve themselves with lunch, well-supported by staff. This encourages them to become involved in the lunchtime process and helps to develop independence skills. Feeding routines for babies are consistent with those followed at home, ensuring consistency of care.

All children are able to regularly enjoy outdoor play. The nursery has outside play areas which the children enjoy. However, most children cannot freely choose to play outdoors if they want to. When outside older children play on a variety of toys and equipment which develop their large motor development. For example, they climb on the climbing frame, ride on wheeled toys and balance on stilts. Younger children look at items hanging around the play area or listen to sounds as they are pushed in buggies. However, the outdoor play areas are uninspiring and do not offer much in the way of challenge for the older children. The area lacks resources to stimulate sensory development in the younger children.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in premises which are secure, bright and well maintained. Staff are vigilant in their approach to safety and supervision. They explain to children when they may be in danger, for example, kneeling on chairs. Each group has their own base rooms. Babies are cared for in a self-contained unit with a milk kitchen and messy play area. Children have space to enjoy their play and to move around. The nursery has outdoor play areas for each group. However, these areas lack stimulation and excitement for the children.

Toys, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for children to use. Toys are good quality and are well maintained. Staff check to ensure that resources are safe when taking them out to offer them to the children. Many toys and resources in the pre-school room are easily

accessible to the children. This is not the case in other rooms, where many resources are stored at adult height.

Evacuation procedures in case of fire are clearly displayed in all areas used by the children. Fire drills are regularly carried out to ensure that staff and children are aware of the procedures. Sleeping children are regularly checked by staff and this check is recorded. Comprehensive risk assessments have been put in place and are regularly monitored by the nursery's health and safety representative. These procedures help to ensure children's safety.

Some staff are trained in child protection, and all are aware of procedures. However, this is not always implemented in practice. This compromises children's safety. A policy to safeguard children is in place and is shared with parents.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

All children enjoy their time at nursery. Most children separate confidently from their parents and carers settling quickly into the nursery with effective support from staff.

Children under two years receive appropriate care to meet their physical needs. Staff cuddle the children giving them re-assurance and the confidence to try new experiences. Children relate well to their carers and enjoy being familiar with others, for example, children frequently cuddle one another. Staff working with the younger children plan activities using the Birth to three matters framework. However, plans follow activities rather than the interests or stage of the individual children. Some staff are skilled at following children's interests, for example, the child who looked for a worm when outside. Babies and toddlers are offered a variety of activities that enable them to explore materials such as "gloop", paint and sand. Babies have opportunities to explore the contents of a treasure basket, but this doesn't happen frequently. Children are offered a variety of resources, but a number of these are plastic. Children's access to natural materials and activities to promote sensory development are limited. Young children enjoy sharing books with staff and respond eagerly to the pictures. Staff help to develop early communication skills as they respond to babies babbling by talking or positive facial gestures.

Children in the two to three age group are not always well supported. Some focused activities are not appropriate for the ages of the children taking part. For example, a follow my leader game was suitable for the older children in the group but the younger children lost interest and became distracted. Staff working with this age group plan activities using the Birth to three matters framework. However, as with the baby room, plans follow activities rather than on the interests or stage of each individual children. Children in this age group can, for parts of the day, choose which room they would like to play in. This offers children choice and helps to develop independence skills. However, the base room for this age group is not exciting or interesting for the children. There are few displays on the walls, many toys are stored at adult height and the room lacks a suitable supply of resources. This limits children's ability to freely explore and use their imagination. Children clearly enjoy being with the other children in their group and make connections with some children. For example, when one child arrived at nursery, another child shouted her name and said "hello".

## Nursery education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are adequately supported to make some progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning. The daily routines offer a secure environment to explore with a suitable range of activities available. Children spend most of the day choosing activities for themselves and are encouraged to develop a positive attitude to learning. The day is mainly unstructured and although the children elect to complete certain activities at the beginning of the session on their diary sheets, this is not followed through and it is not clear which children complete their chosen tasks or how it is evaluated. The staff play with the children and are particularly skilled at asking questions to extend the children's ideas as they join in at 'the hairdressers' or help to create a pattern with construction toys on the floor. Children are well supported to speak and listen and use language to communicate effectively and develop their thoughts. The children frequently make good use of the book corner and enjoy sharing books with each other, alone and with the staff. They show delight when Elmer goes on an adventure, and they discover their favourite tunes on the computer game.

Children happily engage with different groups during the day. They support each other as they play and are learning to negotiate and share their games. Children in the 'home corner' tell the 'visitors' to 'ssh' because the 'baby' is asleep and others discuss how to change their game to include another child in their superman adventure. The children are expected to hang up their coats when they have been outside and help themselves to snacks during the morning. They are gently introduced to self-help tasks with staff available to support as necessary.

Daily group times provide opportunities for children to count by rote. Most are able to join in but progress with counting objects, calculation, number and letter formation is unstructured and not sufficiently introduced in a systematic way, so children are not building on their prior knowledge. The children do not regularly count as they play or identify letter sounds and shapes. They are able to recognise numbers such as '2' and '3' displayed in the nursery and understand these limit the number of children who can use an activity at any one time. There are number and alphabet friezes on display at low levels for teaching reference. Some children can recognise, and attempt to write their own name and they can identify the first letter of their name, but these skills are not routinely encouraged and extended. The children have name cards, pens and pencils on the 'mark-making' table, and mathematical games in a specific area, but the tables lack attractive presentation and are not well used. Staff introduce shapes and mathematical language to some children as they play. The children have fun copying making their fingers into circles and rectangles. They talk about the shapes needed to make a fire engine picture. Patterns are made out of cubes and cylindrical bricks, and children watch the peg boards as they change their patterns and sort colours.

Children have areas to grow vegetables and bulbs outside. They harvested and ate their produce during the summer. However, the outside area is not directly outside their current room and this limits the access for the children. The area is not fully used as an additional classroom for the more active learners and is only made available for limited periods each day, so climbing and balancing and time to run about energetically, is limited.

Some trips into the neighbourhood take place to learn more about the community but these are infrequent. Visitors such as the zoo company and the community police have come to talk to the children and new year was celebrated with a Cantonese meal cooked by a parent and shared with the children. Boys and girls play together very well. They discuss which way to look through the binoculars and sit side-by-side near the computer waiting for the timer to signify the start of their turn. They share scoops in the sand tray and place the netting carefully over the objects 'hiding' in the water trough. A craft resource base has been created with a good selection of glue, paint, collage and recycled materials collected together. Staff introduce activities from these onto a nearby table but the children do not select many items for themselves to extend their activities. The children identify colours with ease. They know which colour mug and plate they would like for snack and can sort out the different coloured monkeys for the monkey-tree balancing game. They make their own sandwiches for tea and smell and taste the foods on offer as they spread the butter and squash the bread together. One child identified the empty shampoo container as smelling like apples and was keen to share this with a friend. They all enjoy playing with the 'emotion' dolls as they talk about their feelings and create different stories.

Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, or are just beginning to learn how to support children's learning through the stepping stones. The timetable provides a secure routine and there is a range of resources available to the children. Presentation of the resources lacks imagination and the children are not attracted to specific areas or guided to make use of activities that will help them to practise particular skills. The staff know their 'key' children well and provide appropriate support to enable these children to make progress in their learning when they happen to share an activity with them. Observations and record keeping contribute to assessments, and individual folders have been started that will provide a useful picture of each child's progress over time. However, continual assessment and weekly planning are not linked in a structured way and children are not routinely tracked or the next steps in their learning identified on the daily plans. It is not currently possible to ensure that all children are making steady progress in all areas of learning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff build children's self-esteem by giving them appropriate tasks to carry out. For example, children tidying bricks were encouraged to carry the box together to put it away. Staff give children choices of which toys and activities they would like to take part in, and this choice is respected, building self-esteem. Most staff are positive role models for the children. Children follow this lead and behaviour is generally good.

Children begin to learn about diversity as they celebrate different festivals and play with a small range of resources reflecting the wider community. However, children see few positive images in the rooms where they play. Children from different backgrounds are not well supported. Staff do not find out what their first language is and make no effort to learn basic words. This does not help children to feel as if they belong.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported in the nursery. Staff work with parents and outside agencies, such as, speech therapists to ensure that care is appropriate

and individual. The designated special educational needs co-ordinator for the nursery is trained to enable her to carry out this role.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Good information about the Foundation Stage curriculum is displayed on the notice board near to the children's pegs. Weekly information is provided about the activities planned for the pre-school children and activity sheets linked to the topic offered to share at home. Parents' evenings for the older children are held twice a year. Parents are not involved in contributing to their child's assessment records on a regular basis as they progress through the stepping stones. They are invited to complete an initial assessment and another when the children leave to go to school.

Children play co-operatively together and are generally well behaved. A child smiles and watches carefully as a friend expels air from a squeeze container on to her face. She enjoys the smell and the feeling. Another sings along quietly to music, rocking her head gently from side to side. The expectations are clear and children wait for their turn at the computer with use of the sand timer. They are praised when they give back a toy taken from another child and well supported to include others in their games. Children with additional learning needs are identified and the staff work closely with parents and other agencies, such as speech therapists, to provide appropriate support. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Procedures for appointing and vetting staff are generally robust. All must provide references, evidence of qualifications and have suitability checks completed. New staff are well supported and supervised to ensure that children are suitably protected. There are sound procedures in place to cover staff absence.

The nursery day is structured to provide a balance of activities for all children. The daily routine allows for younger children's individual sleep and feeding patterns to be followed ensuring consistency of care. All children are given the opportunity to play outdoors to enable them to enjoy fresh air and exercise.

Staff work well together as a team. Key worker systems are in place and appear to be working well. Staff know the children in their group and parents are also familiar with them, giving children continuity of care. Standard ratios are maintained, ensuring children receive appropriate levels of support. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

All legally required records are up-to-date and appropriately stored. The nursery has set up a log to record any complaint and this is compliant with Ofsted's requirements.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff roles for the start of the sessions are clearly defined. They regularly sit with their special group of children and talk with them about the day ahead. Staff are beginning to share responsibility for planning and assessment in the pre-school room and this is developing well. Staff roles to track individual children during the main 'free play' activities is less secure; so some children are not actively encouraged to become

involved in specific activities that will enable them to build on their current skills in a consistent way.

Staff appraisals are held several times a year when 'in-house' and training needs identified. Staff are encouraged to attend local and national, organisational training; to evaluate their learning and to incorporate this into their practice. The introduction of new ideas and developing use of resources has been positive for the children in the pre-school room as staff knowledge grows.

Resources in the pre-school room are varied and provide a good range that supports all areas of learning. Children are able to choose what they want to play with and happily help themselves to activities during most of the day. However, some areas are less well used and promoted by the staff. For example, free use of creative materials for the children to extend ideas for themselves, and the mark-making and mathematics areas.

Good links have been established with the Local Authority support workers and their advice is acknowledged and adopted whenever possible. The proposed new sensory garden and the planning and assessment cycle are developing well with external help.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the nursery agreed to; ensure the registered person meets the required adult: child ratios and ensures that staff deployment allows these to be maintained; ensure that children under two years are cared for in groups of no more than 12; ensure the registered person plans and provides play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities; ensure the registered person promotes the good health of the children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection; ensure the registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and that children's individual needs are met and ensure that adults looking after children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way that promotes their welfare and development.

Children's well-being has improved as standard ratios are being maintained and the youngest children are cared for in appropriate group sizes. Improvements have been made in the planning and play opportunities offered across all groups in the nursery. Plans for the children under three years focus more on the activity offered than on the stage of each individual child. This is an area where the nursery has room for improvement. Most staff within the nursery manage children's behaviour well and children's self-esteem is developing. Staff have clear procedures in place for nappy changing which helps to prevent the spread of infection, but other areas continue to require improvement. A member of staff has been given the responsibility of ensuring that the nursery promotes equality of opportunity. However, this is an area where the nursery still has some weaknesses.

At the last education inspection, the quality of the nursery education provided was judged as having significant weaknesses. The issues to address following the inspection required the setting to improve staff knowledge of the early learning goals and stepping stones; plan activities that are suitable for the children informed by detailed assessments of their progress in the stepping stones; improve adults' interactions with the children to help them settle and learn,



and to address the significant gaps in the educational programme for the six areas of learning. The nursery has worked very hard to raise the standard of education on offer and has made substantial progress.

A key worker system has been introduced and parents and children have good links with their key worker. There are now many incidents of very good interactions with the children. The children show affection towards staff members and are very willing to talk and play with them. They settle to the activities very well and are relaxed and happy as they play. Staff join in with their games and make time to listen and respond for example with a book to read, or as the 'patient' in the 'hospital'.

Planning and assessment is developing slowly with new paper work in place to support the cycle. Activities are organised for flexibility and staff adapt their responses and questions to extend the children's learning. However, daily objectives for individual children are still unclear, so that some children are not consistently supported to build on their prior knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. Planning indicates that all areas of learning will be covered over time. The programme includes long term, medium term and weekly plans that provide a lively and varied range of topics which are reviewed and adapted to include children's own interests as they arise.

Staff training needs have been identified and training courses on the Foundation Stage curriculum attended. Most staff are now familiar with the curriculum requirements and use this knowledge effectively to record information about children's progress linked closely to the stepping stones. Training is considered an ongoing necessity for all staff and well supported by the room leader.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the national Standards.

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):

- ensure positive hygiene procedures are in place and that staff take steps to minimise the risk of cross infection
- ensure that staff take positive steps to safeguard children in their care
- continue to improve planning to show how the individual interests and stage of each child will be extended and developed
- improve children's access to the outdoor play area. Ensure the area is stimulating and exciting for the children to explore and investigate
- ensure that children are able to see positive images of their background and the wider community. Increase the range of resources available which positively reflect society and value the different backgrounds of all those attending

### **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):

- link assessment to planning on a regular basis, so that individual children are able to systematically build on their knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning
- consider the presentation of activities so that they are inviting, challenging and exciting for the children, and exploit their natural instinct to explore
- clarify the staff roles in the daily planning and organisation of activities
- ensure the daily activities provide ample opportunities for the children to engage in mark making and number work

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