

Leapfrog Day Nursery - Woking

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	160645
Inspection date	27 March 2007
Inspector	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
Setting Address	50 Cavell Way, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey, GU21 2TJ
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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

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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 (Woking) was registered in May 2001 and is part of the Leapfrog Day Nursery chain which is part of Nord Anglia Nurseries. It occupies a converted building on a former hospital site in Knaphill, on the outskirts of Woking in Surrey. The nursery is within walking distance of a children's play area and local shops. It serves the local community and families living in the surrounding area.

Children are accommodated in age related groups. Babies are divided into three groups according to their stage of development. The toddlers are divided into two groups according to their age and an additional area on the second floor of the building is set aside for children aged three to five years. There is a multi-sensory room and an enclosed ground floor play area that is open to the fresh air.

The nursery provides care for up to 130 children at any one time. There are currently 128 children from six months to four years of age on roll. Of these, 27 children are in receipt of nursery education funding. Children with learning difficulties/disabilities and those with English as an additional language are welcomed.

Opening hours are from 07:00 to 19:00 each weekday (Monday to Friday) throughout the year. The nursery closes for Bank Holidays.

There are 21 members of staff who share the care of the children and three nursery relief assistants. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are attending training. In addition, there is a nursery administrator. Meals are prepared on site by a cook.

The nursery receives support from the Early Years and Childcare Service (EYCS).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery premises are maintained in a generally satisfactory state of cleanliness overall. However, some carpets remain stained, even following a recent deep clean. The need to address this has been identified and plans are in place to replace carpeting. Staff make sure they clean tables before and after children eat to ensure a generally hygienic environment but some shelving units have accumulated dust and the ground floor play area that children use for physical play has bits of paper strewn around. Both toddlers and pre-school children are familiar with the nursery routine and take themselves off to the bathroom to wash their hands before snack and meal times. Staff follow effective procedures when changing children's nappies which minimises the potential for the spread of infection. Information about exclusion periods for infectious illnesses is displayed and staff are aware of the procedures they should follow in the event of a child being taken ill whilst at nursery. The temperature in the pre-school room can rise and although a thermometer is in place and mobile air conditioning units are available, these are not always turned on in sufficient time to prevent the room becoming a little uncomfortable.

Children have daily access to an enclosed area on the ground floor of the building which provides opportunities for them to be physically active and develop their gross motor skills as they explore the range of large play equipment provided. This play space has bars fitted across the windows instead of glass, which allows fresh air to circulate. On occasions, when ratios allow, staff take children out for walks or to visit a nearby park. Some children participate in the extra curricular activities "Jo Jingles" and "Tots in Sports" that are offered at the nursery.

Young babies sleep according to their individual need. Other children have a sleep after lunch although staff respond appropriately and settle children for a rest before lunch when they are tired. Children sleep in cots or on mats in their base rooms; staff supervise them to ensure their safety and spend time helping children to settle, for example by sitting alongside children and rubbing their backs.

Children are provided with snacks and meals that are prepared on site. Staff seek relevant information from parents about their children's dietary requirements; these are catered for accordingly. Parents are also able to express their preferences with regard to food. Children drink regularly with older children having easy access to their drinks cups so they can help themselves to something to drink as and when they wish.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Rooms are mostly light and airy, decorated with examples of children's artwork which helps to create a welcoming environment and add to children's sense of belonging. Some areas of the nursery are a little tired-looking and plans are in place for the redecoration and refurbishment of the premises. Resources and equipment are in a generally satisfactory condition and state of repair although some books are torn and the seat covering on one of the low chairs used by babies is ripped. The nursery has purchased some new play materials and is in the process of ordering additional items and replacement chairs.

Security measures are good; children cannot leave the building unsupervised and staff control access to the premises. A visitor's book is used to monitor callers and a closed circuit television system means that all areas of the nursery can be observed. Fire safety precautions include the regular checking of appropriate appliances. Monthly fire drills are held to develop children's and staff's understanding of the procedure they should follow in the event of it being necessary to evacuate the premises. A risk assessment is conducted annually and a health and safety monitoring system is in place. There are generally suitable precautions in place throughout the nursery to minimise most areas of potential risk. For instance, high handles on doors and stair gates where necessary mean that children cannot leave rooms unattended. Staff clear away any spilt water promptly and older babies are shown how to go down the stairs safely. However, some flooring has begun to split in the pre-school and toddler rooms which poses a possible trip hazard, as do some mats where the corners have turned up. There are also missing socket covers in one room. On occasions toys are left scattered around the floor in the toddler room.

Staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection issues and the procedure to follow if they have any concerns. Some staff have undertaken specific child protection training to develop their knowledge further although not everyone has taken part in this.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy in the nursery environment and in the company of the adults caring for them who show interest in them. Staff sit on the floor alongside children, talking and playing with them. The youngest babies have lots of toys and some treasure basket items placed within their easy reach and they enjoy the closeness of cuddles. Older babies are supplied with a selection of items that staff arrange around their base rooms. Children have the freedom to move around at will and explore these. Staff provide them with encouragement and support. Young children take part in messy play activities, such as finger painting and they enjoy spending time in the sensory room. Older children can access those play materials that are arranged to be accessible to them although trays of resources are not well labelled, either with pictures and/or words in the toddler and pre-school rooms to aid children's awareness of what is available. Toddlers enjoy playing in the home corner and they are keen to go downstairs to play in the ground floor play area. The messy play area provides children with opportunities to take part in a variety of activities. However, staff do not always ensure that children have sufficient to do and that activities are well presented. For instance, children are provided with chalkboards and chunky chinks, which are a good size for little hands to manage, but staff do not clean the chalkboards first or supply cloths so children can do this themselves. Children enjoy cutting pictures from catalogues and are eager to paint but other resources, such as the sand tray, are not made accessible to them because nobody takes the lid off. A new base room

manager for toddlers has recently started at the nursery and there are plans in place to reorganise the rooms used by these children and to further develop the unit's planning systems.

Staff working with under threes use the Birth to three Matters framework to plan activities and experiences for children. All children throughout the nursery have a "Birth to Five" portfolio that staff use to monitor their achievements and progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Staff arrange the pre-school room to cater for different areas of learning although some areas are not well presented to inspire children's interest, for instance the mathematics table and the role-play area. Children can help themselves to a variety of resources although a lack of labelling on trays of play materials means that it is difficult for children to know what is available. Staff help children understand expectations for behaviour as they explain that they are "looking for children who are sitting nicely." There have been some changes in the staff team working with children in the pre-school room and a new base room manager has only been in post since January. The member of staff who used to be responsible for planning has left and another member of the pre-school staff team has just taken on this responsibility. All children have a key worker who is responsible for monitoring their progress. Staff complete achievement reports which are sent home on a regular basis and they identify the next steps in children's learning. However, currently this information is not being used to inform future planning to ensure that the range of activities and experiences provided are sufficiently challenging and meet the needs of all children.

Most children are self assured and sociable. They display good levels of confidence and relate well to others. Children develop independence as they put on aprons in readiness for water play or painting and as they help to serve themselves at snack and meal times. They do not however pour out their own drinks as staff do this for them. Whilst children remain occupied and enjoy their play, they are not always effectively challenged by the range of toys and activities on offer to them. The organisation of some whole group times is not always fully effective. Children sometimes lose interest and start to fidget because staff are not always entirely successful in engaging and retaining their attention and ensuring that they are sufficiently well challenged.

Children's spoken language skills are developing well. They talk freely to their peers and the adults caring for them. Children recognise their written names and several are able to write clearly formed letters. They often take part in copy-writing exercises and there are lots of examples of this around the pre-school room. However, children have less opportunity to explore writing for a variety of purposes. There are no writing materials in the role-play area and although children have access to a writing table, staff do not always ensure that pencils are sharpened and ready for use. Children enjoy stories; they listen well to a story tape and join in enthusiastically with well-known and well liked stories, such as the "Puffer Fish." Some children are very confident in their ability to link sounds and letters.

Some children recognise and name a broad range of shapes, including those that are less common, such as pentagon and octagon. They count well and some recognise written numerals. Children talk about their ages and they know how old they will be on their next birthday. They enthusiastically join in with number rhymes, such as "five little men in a flying saucer" and are able to tell staff how many men are left after they have completed each verse. It is evident that children are familiar with the concept of counting down but staff do not extend such activities

to challenge them further. Children confidently tell a member of staff what the number of their house is and whilst this is a nice activity, it is not extended in any way to make it more challenging for more able children.

Children move around the base room with good levels of control and co-ordination. They manage the stairs well. Some children cut confidently with scissors; they competently handle pens, pencils and paintbrushes and serve themselves fruit and vegetables at snack and mealtimes using the utensils provided.

Children enjoy going outside the building in small groups to undertake brick rubbings. They show interest in their surroundings; commenting on the arrival of a lorry and questioning why it is present and noticing an aeroplane flying ahead. They play with different construction toys and have opportunities to find out about their community and the wider world through planned topic work.

Children's pictures are displayed around the room. This includes some of their own artwork but also some photocopied sheets that children have painted. Children enjoy playing with the water and engage in imaginative play as they pretend to make "hot chocolate and cups of tea." They take it in turns to paint and enjoy participating in a well presented adult led activity using musical instruments. They know the names of the different instruments and take turns to choose the one they wish to play. Children make up their own stories and games and act these out.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individuality is recognised because staff request detailed information from parents about their children's needs in the form of a questionnaire that covers such aspects as health issues, routines, religious requirements and the way children like to be comforted. The nursery has an interesting selection of books and authentic artefacts from other parts of the world that are used to raise children's awareness of the wider world in which we live, for instance when they introduce them to particular festivals. There are some resources within children's base rooms that reflect positive images although the range is not extensive. A member of staff has recently been appointed special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and is due to undertake training to support her in her role.

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

Children generally behave well although the behaviour of some older children can deteriorate when they lose interest. Staff manage children and speak to them in mostly always appropriate ways. They encourage their use of good manners and they praise children which helps to foster their confidence and self-esteem.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents and carers are well informed about Leapfrog Day Nurseries via an initial prospectus and they receive further information in the form of a welcome pack when their child starts at the nursery. Newsletters and noticeboards throughout the nursery premises offer additional information. There is a daily informal exchange of information that is supplemented by a written daily handover sheet for babies and toddlers. Written consent is obtained for all aspects of children's care. Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings where they can talk to their child's key worker. They are provided with progress reports on their children's achievements although they do not contribute to these.

Parents spoken with at the time of inspection indicated that they feel their children are happy at the nursery. However, some parents commented that they would like more feedback about what their children are doing and how they are progressing.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are grouped according to age in separate base rooms, although on some occasions, groups of children of similar ages spend time together, for instance, when numbers are low. At the time of inspection, appropriate ratios were not maintained at all times when pre-school children were playing in the ground floor play area and a sampling of attendance registers would suggest that adult:child ratios were not correct in one room on another occasion. This is a breach of regulation and places children at potential risk.

Most required documentation is in place and maintained appropriately. However, the displayed complaints procedure does not reflect the revisions to the National Standards (October 2005) to ensure that parents have a clear understanding of the way they can expect any concerns they express about the provision to be dealt with and in what time-scale. Whilst there is a complaints record in place, at the time of this inspection, it was noted that this did not contain details of all complaints in which Ofsted took action. This is a breach of regulation. All paperwork is stored securely and has regard for confidentiality. Written consent is obtained for all aspects of children's care.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Appropriate recruitment, vetting and induction procedures ensure that staff caring for children are suitable to do so. Currently, the nursery meets Ofsted's expectation in that at least 50 per cent of all staff working with children hold appropriate childcare qualifications. Staff have some opportunity for professional development through attendance of relevant training courses and workshops although staff training records show that not many staff have attended further training over the past year.

The nursery manager undertakes a three-monthly self-evaluation of the provision to assess existing practice. At the last review, which was conducted in January 2007, areas for improvement and development have been identified to improve the quality of care and education for all children attending the setting. For instance, there are plans in place for the Base Room manager of the pre-school group to visit another provision to observe practice and support has been sought from the Early Years and Childcare Team. However, existing systems for monitoring practice and the provision for nursery education are not yet sufficiently robust. As a result, there are missed opportunities to challenge children fully and to promote all aspects of their development.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Recommendations made at the setting's last care inspection required improvement in the procedure for keeping babies safe at all times during nappy change procedures and in the standard of hygiene in relation to avoiding contamination of the floor surface in the room for the youngest babies.

The nursery implements a no shoes policy in the room where the youngest babies are based. A highly visible poster acts as a useful reminder for this. However, on some occasions, towards

the end of the day, any younger babies who are still present, are brought downstairs to the playroom where the older babies are based. Outdoor shoes are worn in this room which undermines the other efforts being made to minimise the potential for the spread of infection for younger babies. Staff take positive steps to ensure the safety of babies whilst they wash their own hands after nappy changes.

Key issues identified at the last nursery education inspection related to the improvement of planning, opportunities for children to develop large motor skills, and to use information technology and programmable toys on a regular basis. The nursery was also asked to enhance the programme for language and literacy by providing resources at child height which reinforce their learning.

An alphabet line is positioned within the room at a level that children can see, as is a poster relating to the letter of the week. Children have access to a computer within their base room that they can use as and when they wish. This is quite popular with several children sitting together to complete a matching game. There is also a science table which is resourced with several battery operated toys. Whilst children do show interest in these, their ability to explore these items fully is restricted because none are fitted with working batteries. The nursery has purchased additional equipment for the ground floor play space that enables children to develop further their gross motor skills and there are plans in place to refurbish the play space to offer further opportunities and scope for development and learning. Staff complete focus sheets for specific adult-led activities and a sampling of these shows that in some instances staff identify ways in which these can be adapted to meet the differing needs of children. However, in practice, children are not effectively challenged.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004, Ofsted has received three complaints that required Ofsted or the provider to take action.

In response to concerns raised in August 2004 in respect of staffing issues, Ofsted conducted an investigation and asked the nursery for an action plan detailing how they intended to meet the required ratios for qualified staff (with timescales) and also an operational plan detailing their arrangements for staff cover at the beginning and end of each day and over the lunch period, to ensure that appropriate ratios are maintained at all times. The provider remained qualified for registration.

In March 2005, concerns were raised relating to: National Standard 2 - Organisation in that adult:child ratios were being exceeded and that there were insufficient qualified staff; Standard 7 - Health in that the premises and equipment were dirty and Standard 12 Working in partnership with parents in that complaints made to the provider were not addressed. We investigated these concerns by carrying out an unannounced visit on the 12/04/2005. During the visit the Inspector discussed the concerns raised, inspected registers, training records and the complaints register and observed practices. Following the visit an action was set requiring the provider to construct and send to Ofsted an action plan detailing how the premises and equipment would be kept clean. The provider remained qualified for registration.

On 18 December 2006 concerns were raised under National Standard 4 - Premises, in that the premises and equipment were dirty and old, also that the windows could not be opened on the top floor and there is no fresh air. Concerns were also raised under National Standard 8 - Food and Drink in that the menu was not available for parents to see and that adequate meals were

not given to children. We visited the provider and discussed the allegations. Observations were made of the premises and equipment and menus and meals were discussed along with working in partnership with parents. From the information gathered during the visit actions have been raised to ensure furniture, equipment and toys are maintained appropriately and conform to safety standards and to ensure that all toys, furnishings and equipment are clean and suitable for children to use. The provider's progress on these actions will be monitored and they remain 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):

- ensure the cleanliness of all areas of the nursery and improve existing monitoring procedures to ensure this. Monitor the temperature of the pre-school room and take steps to ensure it does not become too uncomfortable
- improve monitoring procedures to identify any potential hazards and take steps to minimise these to ensure the safety of children
- consider ways of improving the presentation of resources and activities to inspire children's interest, help them know what is available to play with and enable them to easily access these (nursery education also)
- ensure correct adult:child ratios are maintained at all times
- amend the written complaints procedure to ensure that this reflects the changes to the criteria to the National Standards October 2005 and ensure the nursery's complaints log contains details of all complaints since 01 April 2004 where Ofsted has required the provider to take action.

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):

- continue to develop observation and assessment procedures and use the information gained to inform future planning so that activities provide children with sufficient challenge
- provide children with opportunities to explore writing for a variety of purposes and ensure that programmable toys are maintained in working order

- investigate ways of encouraging and enabling parents to contribute to the progress records kept on their children to aid their awareness of what their children are doing and how they are progressing
- develop and instigate systems to monitor the provision of nursery education to ensure that this meets the needs of all children, in particular that activities offer sufficient challenge.

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