

Leapfrog Day Nursery - Northwich

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305146
Inspection date	22 February 2008
Inspector	Sarah Elizabeth Howell
Setting Address	1 Kingsmead Square, Regency Way, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 8UW
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Registered person	Leapfrog Day Nurseries (Trading) Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Leapfrog Day Nursery opened in 2000. It was bought by the Busy Bees nursery chain in October 2007. It operates from a purpose built, single storey unit in the Kingsmead area of Northwich, close to local schools and shops. The nursery serves the local and surrounding areas.

The setting is registered to provide care for a maximum of 107 children aged from birth to under eight years, and of these, not more than 38 may be under two years. There are currently 88 children on roll, of whom 31 are in receipt of funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery provides care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and for children with English as an additional language. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday all year round, excluding Bank Holidays, between 07:00 and 19:00.

There are 21 staff within the setting, of these there is a manager, administrator and full-time cook, 16 full-time and five part-time staff work with the children. A high proportion of staff have early year's qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being are effectively promoted within the nursery. Staff employ a wide range of good working practises which help to keep the environment and children clean and reduce the risk of illness spreading. Children quickly learn how to keep themselves safe from germs through being shown how to wash their hands properly at appropriate times, cover their mouths when they cough and keep their noses clean and dispose of tissues hygienically. The nursery environment is clean and well maintained. Parents are well informed about the settings health and safety policies and procedures. For example, they have recently been given up-to-date information about changes to the nursery's medication procedures.

The provision of meals and snacks which promote children's healthy development is excellent. Children thoroughly enjoy mealtimes and try a wide range of nutritious and freshly cooked foods daily. Parents comment very favourably about the provision of food and the organisation of mealtimes. For example, commenting that children become more confident about trying new tastes and textures because of the diversity of foods they have at nursery and how quickly they become confident in managing cutlery and developing good table manners. Portions are good and seconds are generally available to those who want them.

Mealtimes are well organised and provide children with ample time to enjoy their food and practise their social skills. Children's access to drinking water is generally appropriate. All children are offered drinks of water or milk at every meal and snack time. Older children have access to jugs of water and cups although they make limited use of this facility. Under twos cannot independently access their drinking cups as these are stored on a high shelf.

Children have daily opportunities to enjoy outside play and a variety of planned indoor activities also promote the development of their physical skills and abilities. The provision of resources and equipment to promote children's enjoyment of the outdoors and active play is also good. Children particularly enjoy and make good use of the large static climbing frame and a good sufficiency of scooters, tricycles and ride on toys means that they do not have too long to wait before they can have a turn. Activities, such as dance tots or stretch and grow, also enable children to have fun whilst developing their physical skills and abilities.

Staff effectively promote children's learning about healthy lifestyles through planned activities, discussion and children's everyday routines. For example, topics on dental hygiene support pre-school children in learning about how to care for their teeth. All children are involved in baking and food tasting activities which promote discussion about foods which help their growth and development. In addition children are beginning to explore the role of being active in keeping them fit and well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Parents and children are warmly welcomed into the nursery by staff. Reception areas and wall displays provide parents with a wide variety of interesting and useful information, for example, photographs of what children do at nursery, menus and details of forthcoming events. Home base rooms are generally well organised to promote children's enjoyment of activities and to provide quiet and calm spaces for sleep and relaxation. Outdoor play space is very easily

accessible from each home base room allowing staff to make good use of this for children when the weather permits. Toilets are also very accessible to children in each home base room which makes toilet training easier. However, there are times when doors to the toilets are propped open inappropriately which is not hygienic and does not give children sufficient privacy.

The provision of toys and resources throughout the nursery is generally satisfactory although the books in the preschool room are in a poor state of repair and pages fall out when children use them. The nursery manager explained that a large amount of new toys and equipment is currently on order. For example, although children in the toddler room have access to a wide range of age appropriate toys, their organisation is limited which makes it difficult for children to know what there is to choose from. New storage systems have been ordered which will improve both the organisation and accessibility of toys within this room. The range, quality and organisation of toys and equipment for children under two is good. Equipment to promote children's enjoyment of the outdoors and of social occasions, such as mealtimes is good.

Arrangements for keeping children safe and secure within the nursery are generally good. For example, thorough, detailed health and safety procedures are in place which are reviewed with staff on a regular basis to ensure that they are being followed. Accident records are audited monthly to look at ways in which arrangements for children's safety can be improved. Provision for keeping children and staff safe in the event of fire related emergencies are also good. However, two items require further attention. There are times in the pre-school room when the floor space is cluttered with toys and equipment which children trip over. In addition, cleaning activities including vacuuming are often started within home base rooms whilst children and parents are present. This is noisy and involves an element of risk which has not been appropriately assessed.

Children's safety and well-being are also protected through the setting's clear commitment to following appropriate safeguarding procedures. Written policies and procedures relating to child protection form part of staff induction and are also available to parents on request. The majority of staff in the nursery have a clear understanding of both the range of possible indicators of abuse and neglect and the settings child protection procedures. However, more recently employed staff are less clear about these issues and procedures. All senior staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and know whom to contact for advice and guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Good settling in and room transition arrangements mean that children settle comfortably and securely in their home base rooms. Staff work together to plan and provide an appropriate range of activities and experiences for the children in their home base rooms. Visual displays using photographs of children as they play provide parents with useful information about what children do at nursery, their enjoyment and how this links to their development and learning. Staff working with children under three make appropriate use of the ' Birth to Three Matters framework' to promote children's enjoyment, support their development and reflect on and plan for their next steps.

Children under two enjoy exploring their well organised environment. Toys and equipment are set out attractively around the room to encourage young children to explore and develop their physical skills and abilities. Staff working with the under twos have a clear understanding of children's developmental needs and how to support and promote these. For example, young children have lots of physical contact with their carers, being held, cuddled and comforted to

provide lots of emotional reassurance for them and to help them feel safe and secure. As a result children appear very settled in their environment and confidently explore what is provided for them. Staff provide a good balance between stimulating activities and experiences and rest and relaxation for children.

Children in the toddler room, aged between two and three years, are learning to play well together and develop good social and self care skills. Staff place emphasis on supporting children in learning how to interact positively with each other, to share, take turns and enjoy the opportunities to play with others as well as to follow their own interests. This works well and parents comment that their children become more confident in their interactions with other children and adults as a result of their experiences at nursery. Children particularly enjoy singing along to the guitar and taking part in action rhymes and trying to remember the words to their favourite rhymes. As a result they are learning to listen, distinguish between sounds and enjoy the rhythm and intonation of language.

Children are provided with a wide range of activities and experiences most of which they clearly enjoy and provide appropriate support for their development and learning. However, there are times when activities provide more limited experiences for children as they are poorly managed by staff. For example, creative activities, where the emphasis is placed on the end product rather than the experience for the child. Staff deployment within the toddler room at times limits children's ability to play independently and follow their own interests. For example, several times during the day children are grouped together for an activity to enable staff to complete ancillary tasks such as clearing up after meals and snacks. Children sometimes appear frustrated by this as they want to continue to play with the toys around them.

Nursery Education

The provision for teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff provide a wide variety of planned activities and experiences for children which they enjoy and which provide appropriate support for their development and learning. Children generally make good use of what is provided for them, for example, they play for sustained periods of time in the role play and creative areas which provides effective support for the development of their fine manipulative and creative skills and encourages them to use their imagination and develop their language skills.

Although resources to promote children's familiarity with Information technology systems and programmable toys are readily available in the pre-school room, children appear hesitant and unsure about how to use them. For example, children were not observed to make very much use of the two computers within the room and other children struggled to make the remote control bee work. Opportunities for children to become familiar with numbers and counting are plentiful and fun. Many children count readily and with ease up to and beyond ten. However, staff do not make as much use of children's everyday play and routines to involve children in basic problem solving with numbers. As a result children are less confident in attempting these activities.

Some good teaching skills help children to make good progress with certain areas of their development. For example, opportunities for mark making are well integrated into the whole range of activities available to children during each session. As a result children are generally developing good control over pens, pencils and brushes so that they can create effectively with them. A number of children are able to form the letters in their name correctly. Similarly, the emphasis placed by staff on supporting children in developing good social skills promotes children's ability to relate well to each other and to adults, to develop friendships and to operate

with confidence in small and large group situations. In turn this enables children to speak with more confidence in front of others.

However, there are also times within the pre-school room when children do not appear to benefit as well from the organisation of their learning environment. For example, children sometimes appear uninterested in what is available to them and they do not engage with any of the activities for any length of time. They are observed to pick up toys and discard them which results in the floor becoming littered. Also at these times children are more likely to behave inappropriately, for example, needing to be repeatedly reminded by staff not to run around. At these times children's enjoyment and learning is hindered by their apparent disinterest.

Children clearly enjoy and benefit from the time they spend in small group activities being supported by experienced and enthusiastic staff. For example, exploring imaginative and pretend games through the use of small world equipment which encourages them to develop their use of language for thinking as well as for speaking. Staff make good of these opportunities to observe and monitor children's progress in relation to the six areas of learning. They record their observations and then link them appropriately to the stepping stones and add them to children's developmental records.

Parents are made aware of these records when children move into pre-school and know that they can see them on request. Staff have recently improved the format for recording observations to make them easier to maintain and to make them more meaningful for parents. For example, the use of photographs to illustrate children's developmental progress. Children's records clearly indicate what is planned to support their ongoing learning.

Staff are making appropriate use of their observations of children as they play to inform the planning of activities and resources. Key workers generally take responsibility to ensure that observations cover all areas of children's learning and that any gaps in children's progress through the stepping stones are highlighted. Planning is done weekly and all staff contribute using their observations of children so that it reflects both children's interests at that point in time and their developmental needs. This provides informed support for children's learning and development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are valued within the setting and equality of opportunity for all children is promoted. Children are encouraged to share, take turns and play well together so that everyone can enjoy their time at nursery and participate in the activities and experiences provided. This works well because staff place emphasis on helping children to develop their personal social skills from a young age. Children explore the idea of friendship, what it means and how friends behave towards one another. As a result they are learning how to value their relationships with others and how to make them work well.

Children have very good support in learning to understand and respect the differences between themselves and others. For example, children are encouraged to recognise that they all have different skills and abilities and that because of this they can learn from one another. This creates a very positive, supportive atmosphere for children in the setting. Children also learn about issues to do with diversity through planned topic work. For example, they explore the

celebrations and festivals of various cultures through art and craft work, stories and food tasting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Staff are skilled at adapting the setting, individual activities and their own skills and abilities to ensure that all children are able to participate fully in the experiences available to them. This ensures they have good support for their learning and development. Children are also effectively supported in learning to have good control over their behaviour. They are actively encouraged to behave well through recognition and encouragement, for example, when they are sharing well, showing kindness to others and helping staff. Staff respond calmly and effectively to minor disputes and show children how to try and resolve issues for themselves, successfully placing the emphasis on friendship, playing together and enjoyment. As a result children generally behave well which promotes their development and learning within the setting.

Partnership with parents is good. The nursery provides a wide variety of information for parents about what children do, policies, procedures and staff practises. Often this is displayed visually around the setting which makes it very accessible to parents. Staff are approachable and friendly and parents confirm that they find it easy to talk to staff about their children and that communication is good. Staff work very closely with parents from the beginning of children's placements so that they are well informed about children's needs and dispositions and make good use of this information as they care for children. Very regular newsletters also keep parents informed of any social events taking place at nursery.

Parents whose children receive funded nursery education have specific information about how the Foundation Stage Curriculum is implemented within the setting. When children move in to the pre-school room staff spend time with parents explaining the planning for children's learning and how they observe, monitor and record children's progress through the stepping stones. In addition, visual displays and children's developmental records provide very clear information for parents about what children do and how this promotes their development and learning. The nursery also provides parents with lots of useful information about how to approach supporting children as they move on to school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Procedures for recruiting, vetting and monitoring the ongoing suitability of staff are good. Staff have induction, supervision and appraisals which enable managers to identify and support staff training and development needs. Staff comment that they have sufficient access to training, particularly in house training provided by the Local Authority. The nursery makes appropriate use of training to plan for the future and to develop and improve the work being undertaken with children. For example, pre-school staff have worked closely with the Local Authority pedagogue to develop the use of continuous provision and to improve systems for monitoring children's development.

Although adult to child ratios are well maintained at all times within the nursery, there are some weaknesses with how staff are deployed within the setting which at times limits the quality of children's experiences. For example, the repeated grouping of children in the toddler room whilst staff complete ancillary tasks at times limits their enjoyment of freely chosen play activities. In addition there are times each day when children's experiences and activities are adapted so that cleaning staff can access rooms and complete tasks. This is not always

appropriate especially as these times often coincide with children being tired and having to cope with additional noises and distractions.

Leadership and management in the setting is satisfactory. Staff children and parents all benefit from the well organised procedures and systems which are in place, for example, the policies, procedures and designated staff arrangements for Health and Safety ensure that these issues are well monitored. The nursery manager is supported by Busy Bees area managers to help her to fulfil her role and manage the setting appropriately. The manager in turn works closely with pre-school staff to review and evaluate the implementation of funded nursery education in the setting. For example, she uses her knowledge and experience of the Foundation Stage Curriculum to encourage staff to consider how the use of continuous provision can be extended to improve children's enjoyment and learning outcomes. Staff throughout the nursery are also encouraged to evaluate their own practises and the manager supports these processes by providing staff with time away from their child care roles. As a result staff are committed to a process of continuous improvement.

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are well maintained, regularly reviewed and are easily accessible for day to day use and for the purposes of inspection. Parents are made aware about what records are kept in relation to their children and developmental records are shared with them at regular intervals. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were made. The first related to providing evidence that cleaning task sheets were completed. This is no longer applicable. The nursery maintains good standards of cleanliness and hygiene and staff and managers follow appropriate systems for checking this daily. In addition staff were asked to provide complete activities for children. This has been appropriately followed up and activities and resources provided for children are age appropriate and in good order to promote children's enjoyment of their play.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection in 2003 there have been two complaints made to the provider that required them to take action to meet the National Standards. One related to National Standard 6: Safety and the other to National Standard 7: Health and Hygiene. In both instances the complaints were investigated by the provider and immediate, appropriate action was taken to address the issues and comply with the National Standards. Ofsted is satisfied that the provider remains qualified for registration. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by the 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 that all staff have a clear understanding of the nursery's safeguarding procedures and are aware of the range of possible indicators of abuse and neglect
- review the cleaning arrangements within the nursery to ensure that these do not pose a health and safety risk for children, parents and staff
- review the deployment of staff within home base rooms to ensure that this more effectively promotes children's enjoyment and supports their development and learning.

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):

- provide more support for all children to explore and find out how the computer and the programmable toys in the setting work
- extend the opportunities available to children to use their number knowledge to solve simple mathematical problems, for example, through their everyday routines as well as through planned activities.

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