

# Leapfrog Day Nursery - Birmingham, St James Road

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY226075
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 February 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Diane Ashplant / Carol Johnson
<b>Setting Address</b>	54 St. James Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, West Midlands, B15 1JL
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4564919
<b>E-mail</b>	
<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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Leapfrog Day Nursery opened in September 2002 and is part of the Busy Bees group. The nursery operates from different rooms on both floors of the building which is set in the Edgbaston area of Birmingham. A maximum of 135 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens every weekday for 51 weeks of the year from 07.30 to 19.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 138 children from three months to five years on roll. Of these, 30 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and come from the local and surrounding areas. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 36 staff currently employed to work with the children as well as additional support staff. Three quarters of the staff group hold an appropriate early years qualifications and most of the remainder are working towards one.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted through regular use of outside play areas where they use equipment like slides, climbing frames and wooden blocks to develop their co-ordination and physical skills. They enjoy different movement games, such as following each other on the chalk road and play with resources such as balls and hoops. Most children have good space within their rooms for movement around and babies can practise their crawling and walking skills. Children take part in regular sessions of music and movement to tapes and instruments and some thoroughly enjoy their weekly 'Jazzmatazz' session where they enthusiastically move around as they, for example, pretend to be fish, rabbits or frogs. Children are cared for in a clean and healthy environment which is maintained daily by outside cleaners and supplemented by the nursery staff throughout the day. All toys and equipment are routinely sterilised and cleaned to reduce the chance of cross infection. Thorough routines are carried out by baby staff with regard to nappy changing and these are well documented along with sleep times. Children's health is well protected in the event of an accident or illness as most staff hold current first aid certificates and are knowledgeable about infectious diseases. There are very clear procedures for the dispensing of any medication and these, together with accidents, are generally well recorded and signed by parents.

Children are learning about protecting their own health through the daily routines such as hand washing before food and after playing outside, and using tissues to wipe noses. Some of the older children independently carry out all these self-care routines and know, for example, not to use cutlery which has fallen on the floor. Staff use activities and discussion very well to promote children's understanding of different health-related matters such as the importance of dental care and foods that are good for maintaining healthy teeth.

Children's health is well promoted through a well-balanced and nutritious diet which offers children a good variety and also includes cultural variations such as noodles for Chinese New Year. Children have a daily fruit platter of different fruits and older ones can independently access the fruit bowl which is kept for them at the snack bar. Discussion and activities around healthy foods such as making fruit smoothies helps children understand why certain foods are good for them. Staff are very aware of the importance of respecting children's individual dietary needs and have discussed these carefully with parents and recorded them clearly in every room and on the food trolley. Any specific needs are recorded on an alert form and served on different coloured plates for easy identification which many of the older children have also learnt to recognise. All babies are fed and slept according to their individual routines which are clearly summarised in their coloured booklets and all preparation and storage of food is appropriately carried out. Children have regular drinks at all times to keep them hydrated and the older children can help themselves to the fresh water which is always available. Meal times are sociable occasions with staff sitting with the children and supporting them appropriately according to their individual needs. Older children are developing their independent skills as they are encouraged to help set the tables, serve themselves and then help clear way.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where staff are generally alert to potential hazards and have taken effective action to protect children from most of these. All

the baby rooms are thoughtfully laid out to provide good space for movement, along with a range of appropriate equipment and resources which are checked regularly to ensure they are safe and suitable. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area where children move around confidently and a routine risk assessment checks for hazards such as glass and other rubbish which may be thrown over as the building is set in a busy area. Staff are aware of what may pose a risk to children and most of the rooms are spacious and organised to encourage independent movement around. All appropriate procedures are in place to ensure children's safety at all times such as during outings. Regular fire drills are carried out, both planned and unplanned, and most staff have had additional training from the Fire Officer. In most rooms staff have created a good balance between appropriate supervision and allowing children their own independence. For example, children are reminded by staff of the dangers of going up and down steps and so most follow the guidelines for safety such as keeping to one side, holding on to the banister and not pushing. Many of the older children have now learnt to use equipment like scissors and staplers safely. All access to the nursery is well monitored and appropriate policies and procedures are in place to protect children's safety such as safe collection and staff are fully aware of these.

Children's welfare is well protected by staff who are alert to the signs and symptoms relating to child protection and are clear about their responsibility to pass on serious concerns appropriately. This responsibility is shared effectively with parents at registration. Most staff have attended recent safeguarding training which heightens their awareness in this area.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in this bright and attractively decorated nursery by staff who get to know them well and offer them a wide range of different experiences to encourage their interest and development in all areas. Although there is some basic planning for young children around the 'Birth to three matters' framework the focus is on child-centred play which means staff work from children's own choices where they feel comfortable and respond and develop their interest through this. The babies are well supported by attentive staff who are able to judge their moods and interests well, providing alternative play opportunities to keep them interested and engaged or offering a cuddle and some reassuring talk to help them settle. There is a good range of age-appropriate resources set at child level for children to enjoy, and different creative experiences to help them explore all their senses such as playing with noodles, paints, cornflour and shredded paper or enjoying the different lights in the sensory room. Older children have regular opportunities to widen their experiences through outdoor play and visits from external organisations. Most children are able to direct their own play choices and engage for some time, while others are supported by staff as they enjoy more adult-led activities like making cards or sand painting. Staff understand that children's learning is promoted by positive interaction and conversation and often engage with children, encouraging them through suggestions and questions. They are aware that children make progress in different ways and therefore monitor this on a regular basis through recording 'wow' moments as well as undertaking more focused assessments. Staff in the baby room understand the benefits of these individual times for building up their relationships with children. They also provide opportunities for staff to observe their development more closely and therefore they routinely plan for these every week. Each child has its individual folder where items of work and comments and photos provide a much prized record of their time at the nursery to share with family and friends. Children respond and interact well with the staff and enjoy sharing activities with them.

Teaching and Learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff who work with the pre-school children have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage and the way young children learn. They have planned a programme which is both stimulating and challenging. They have created a very rich learning environment full of exciting opportunities to encourage children to explore and develop through real experiences which staff regularly re-enforce through discussions and photographs. The programme is very well supported by an excellent range of play and learning resources which are easily accessible to children to encourage independent choices. The genuine enthusiasm and spontaneity of staff, who clearly enjoy seeing children's natural curiosity as learners come alive, inspires children to listen, engage and learn. Staff are very skilled at using all opportunities to maximise children's learning and to incorporate all areas naturally into one activity. They successfully reinforce children's understanding by recapping on shared events like discussing how many pancakes they ate and what the different toppings taste like. Staff also constantly value children's own experiences and encourage them to share these at nursery. The pre-school manager has carefully thought out the most effective way of monitoring children's progress so that staff can easily record significant moments on the forms and keep them in their own baskets. Focus activities are evaluated daily to ensure they are fully engaging the children and successfully meeting the learning intentions. Each staff member keeps their own daily records and they all come together to share ideas. This enables them all to contribute to discussions about the progress of each child and how they will plan for their next steps. This means that staff know the individual capabilities of all children and can effectively challenge and support all.

Children in this pre-school thrive in a vibrant environment where they want to discover and learn and so become very receptive to new ideas and thoughts. Most children talk with great confidence, whether at circle time or in small groups, and show a real love of books as they listen attentively at story time. They join in with enthusiasm to remembered songs and rhymes and are enthusiastic and fascinated as they hear different languages. Children have many opportunities to make marks as they chalk their names on the ground or write holiday postcards. Staff naturally build on children's own interests, for example, by encouraging those who are not drawn to the writing table to make letters in the sand or cornflour. Children are learning to recognise letters and their own names as they self-register or identify their own pictures and show great interest and excitement as they learn French songs and words or write their own names in Chinese. Children have many opportunities throughout the daily routine to use numbers and problem solve as they, for example, count the number of children at the table, collect the right number of spoons and then hand them out. They regularly talk about shapes and sizes such as whether their jumpers have stripes or circles, and confidently use number rhymes. Activities such as clocks mean children discuss shapes and numbers, identifying where the hands are and then draw their own clocks. Staff reinforce this time concept by introducing egg-timers which fascinate the children and further extend their understanding.

Children in this group are very confident and sociable and have soundly learnt the social skills of listening and taking turns as they very promptly respond to requests to use 'listening ears'. Consequently, they are fully involved and concentrate for long periods of time during group activities such as looking at the clock or talking about pancakes or enthusiastically singing the 'Please and thank you' song as they wait patiently for their pudding. This also means they engage and absorb much from the well-planned activities on offer and are eager and receptive to new things. They have many opportunities to learn about different countries and celebrations as staff plan an exciting range of creative activities such as round Australia Day and also use the experiences of individuals within the group, which in turn makes them feel very proud and valued. They also thoroughly enjoy the visits from outside people who bring more excitement, variety and fun into the daily routine. Children are fascinated as they experiment with magnets

and have lots of conversations around how things change such as ice and ice cream. They enjoy the thrill of planning sessions from the start and producing the finished product. For example, children go to the kitchen and choose different vegetables, help prepare them for cooking and then taste the finished soup. Staff immediately capture the moment in a step-by-step photographic account which is displayed for all to remember. Children also begin to understand nature as they talk about babies, look at wild life in the garden and grow their own plants. Throughout their time at pre-school children are fully challenged to extend their knowledge in all areas. They become confident and sociable individuals and thoroughly enjoy their time with staff who make learning fun, interesting and exciting by their exceptional commitment and enthusiasm.

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

The provision is good.

Children at this nursery are welcomed and encouraged to settle in by staff who get to know them well. The very effective use of the key worker system creates a good link between parent, child and staff from the start. All necessary information is taken about each individual child. This helps staff compile their 'All about me' file which continually expands throughout the child's time at nursery. All babies' individual routines are discussed carefully with parents and recorded in their own booklet so that they can be easily identified by all staff which means all babies are slept, rested and fed according to their own particular preferences. Children are encouraged to share events from family and home, which includes photographs as staff seek to encourage each child's sense of their own identity. Children are able to choose their own play items from the wide range that is easily accessible to them and these include those reflecting positive images of diversity.

The nursery encourages many interesting links with the community outside which means the children enjoy visits from people such as the fire service and Zoolab or listen to the 'Bangra' man. This provides many new experiences for children which they can enjoy and learn from. Children also learn about the wider world as they celebrate many different festivals such as Chinese New Year and Australia Day, and participate in interesting topic-related activities or taste different foods such as pancakes and noodles. Staff know their children well and understand that some children have additional needs. Staff with the particular responsibility for supporting these children have good knowledge of appropriate ways to do this, spontaneously directing a session to ensure all children are engaged and included. Staff know how to set up individual plans to support children and work effectively with parents and outside professionals to identify future action.

Children's behaviour is generally good as they respond to the clear guidelines set by staff and learn about the implications of their actions by, for example, focusing on their own and others' feelings. Children are given lots of praise and encouragement which helps develop their self-esteem and their work is valued and displayed around the room and in their folders. Staff regularly celebrate their efforts by awarding them certificates which are on show around the nursery. Children are developing their social skills as they play together and share and tidy away toys or serve themselves at meal times. Most staff use effective strategies to help support and include the more challenging children, although these are not always consistently maintained for some of the younger children. Older children are very sociable, playing well with friends or on their own and they confidently engage in conversation with the staff and each other. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural needs are met.

Staff work very effectively with parents and are approachable and friendly which helps the sharing of necessary information about the children. For example, staff are always in the reception area to offer a welcome and a chat. Parents are well supported by their child's key worker as their children settle in and then throughout their time at nursery. They also receive a parent pack which explains all about the nursery. Regular newsletters and informative displays on boards around the nursery keep them aware of current events and relevant information. Daily information is shared through verbal exchanges and daily sheets for the younger ones, and parents are encouraged to look at their development folders at any time. Parents are invited on trips such as to Ash End Farm and to participate in fund raising events and social occasions like 'Ladies Night' which encourages relaxed and open communication. Information about their children's progress is shared effectively at the parents evenings when they discuss with their key worker their child's development and view their report.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. Parents are superbly supported by committed staff who are always available to talk about the children and proudly share their work. Parents receive lots of meaningful information about the Foundation Stage through the very well-designed parent pack and informative displays on the notice boards which help parents to fully understand what the curriculum means for their child's learning. They are also kept up to date with any current developments within early years. Regular 'activities at home' letters explain about the focus topic and related activities which are planned for the children and offer lots of useful suggestions, for example, lists of topic-related books, rhymes and resources so that parents can enjoy and effectively extend their children's learning at home. Parents are invited to share special family events such as birthdays and cultural celebrations which develops a very good link between home and nursery, and children and parents enthusiastically record the adventures of the nursery bears when they visit their homes. Staff have an excellent relationship with parents and are very friendly and approachable, ensuring that there are very useful exchanges of information at the end of the day. Parents are invited to regular parents' evenings when they share and discuss their children's progress and report and agree their next steps. Parents are encouraged to view their child's development folder at any time and invited to make comments on the curriculum and their child's time in pre-school. All this establishes a superb link between home and nursery so that parents and staff work very successfully together to support children's learning and celebrate their success.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children at this nursery are cared for in an environment which is generally well organised around the needs of the individual children and where staff know the children well. Such systems as the effective use of key workers and planned weekly one-to-one sessions in the baby room ensure that children benefit from good care and attention. The nursery operates on a high staff ratio which means that most children have good support and attention from staff who engage and interact well with them and management have instigated effective systems to monitor this. However, the use of space and deployment of staff in some areas means that the needs of some of the younger children are not always appropriately met which also sometimes impacts on their behaviour. All appropriate recruitment and selection procedures are in place to ensure the suitability of the staff who are working with the children. Regular staff meetings, which incorporate both a base-room meeting and a full staff meeting ensure good exchanges of information. On-going staff development is supported by a six-monthly appraisal scheme and a good commitment to further training to enhance knowledge and practice. Therefore, for example, nearly all staff have current first aid, food hygiene and safeguarding training. Staff

work well together and each room has a senior base-room supervisor to ensure the efficient running of the room.

All required documentation is in place and generally well maintained and up to date. The nursery is currently reviewing all its policies and procedures to ensure these are consistent across the nursery chain and reflect current practice and information. All daily records such as attendance registers are well maintained. Most of the detailed information is kept in a locked cupboard in the office which ensures confidentiality and other daily records such as those for accident and medication are always completed in the office in the presence of senior staff. Management have a sound understanding of when to contact Ofsted and have clear written policies to support this.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. The manager and staff are genuinely committed to providing the highest quality of care and education for the children. All staff working with the pre-school children have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage and are confidently able to maximise the learning opportunities for all children as they respond instinctively to them and inspire their interest and enthusiasm. Many of the staff have undertaken advanced training so they are constantly reviewing and challenging their own practices and developing their knowledge. All staff work very well together to support all children and provide a confident and committed group who have created an excellent balance of independent play and supported learning. They have organised a very stimulating play and learning environment and a well-structured and exciting programme covering all areas of learning, including a successful mix of outside and inside opportunities. Staff further widen children's experiences by inviting a range of visitors into the group and organising different trips into the community. Staff are consistently evaluating their education programme and focus activities to ensure they are effective in challenging and engaging all children, and routinely come together to share the results of this so they can plan more effectively for each child and help them achieve their potential. They also consult with and fully involve the parents in many ways during their child's time at the nursery so ensuring that they all work towards children's happiness and success. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

At the last inspection there were two recommendations set in relation to: staff's knowledge and involvement in the planning of activities, and the range of opportunities for under twos to extend their development in all areas. Staff have appropriate opportunities to share in the planning and most have completed the training for the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They respond effectively to the children and support and engage them appropriately. Children under two have a good range of resources to promote their interest and development in all areas.

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

Since April 1st 2004 there have been three complaints made to Ofsted which resulted in action being taken in order to meet the National Standards. In June 2004 a complaint was received regarding staffing in the baby unit. The resulting visit demonstrated that suitable ratios were in place(Standard 2) but an action was raised with regard to hygiene routines. The provider responded appropriately on 22/07/2004. The provider remains qualified for registration.



In June 2006 Ofsted received a complaint about the use of a baby rocker and the level of supervision at the setting which related to National Standard 6 (Safety). Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit and found no evidence in relation to this but did find evidence of a breach of National Standard 12( Partnership with parents). The provider was set an action regarding the maintenance of a complaint log and a satisfactory response to this action was received July 2006. The provider remains qualified for registration.

In September 2006 Ofsted received a complaint about adult: child ratios in the baby room which raised concerns in relation to National Standards 2(Organisation) and 3(Care, learning and play). Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit and found no evidence to suggest a breach of National Standard 3. However, there was evidence of a breach of National Standard 2 and actions were set relating to the recording of children and staff's attendance and the competency of those caring for babies. Ofsted received a satisfactory response to the actions on 25 October 2006. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **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):

- review the procedures for handling the behaviour of younger children to ensure they are consistent and developmentally appropriate
- review the use of staff, space and other resources to ensure younger children are well cared for and supported at all times.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)