

Leapfrog Day Nursery - Shenley

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY307712
Inspection date	06 September 2007
Inspector	Jane Mount
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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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Leapfrog Day Nursery at Shenley is one of a large chain of nurseries who operate throughout the UK. The setting opened in 2005 and was an existing nursery. It operates from six rooms with associated facilities in a purpose-built single storey premises. A fully secure, large outside area is available for outside play. The nursery is situated in Shenley, Hertfordshire and serves the local and wider community.

A maximum of 110 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 109 children on roll and of these, 16 receive funding for nursery education. Children can attend for a variety of sessions including full day care. The setting is able to support children who have English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting operates Monday to Friday from 07.30 to 18.30 for 52 weeks of the year excluding bank holidays.

The nursery employs 31 staff. This includes the manager, a cook and an administrations assistant and 75% of the staff who work with children hold an early years childcare qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning how to stay healthy. Staff support and help children to gain a clear understanding of good health and hygiene practices. For example, they remind children to use tissues to wipe their noses and to dispose of them appropriately to minimise the risk of cross infection. Children are beginning to understand they must wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating. They enthusiastically use the liquid soap in the bathroom when washing their hands and then enthusiastically dry their hands on the paper towels. When asked older children are able to say it is important to wash their hands before they eat to wash away any germs so they don't become unwell and 'get a tummy ache'.

Children's health is overall protected because most staff have a high regard of how to implement the nursery's health and hygiene policies to a very high standard. For example, clear and highly effective recording procedures are in place for accidents and the administration of medicines which staff implement in a consistent manner including obtaining parental signatures as required. Also, tables are thoroughly cleaned with anti-bacterial spray before and after children eat and staff wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies. Therefore, the risk of cross infection is minimised and children stay healthy. However, in the baby room hygiene procedures are not always prioritised. For example, the milk kitchen is not cleaned to a satisfactory standard, some playroom equipment is soiled and good hygiene practices are not always followed when feeding babies. Consequently, very young children's health is potentially not safeguarded.

Children benefit from a healthy, balanced diet. They enjoy nutritious meals and snacks with menus displayed for parents to see. All meals are freshly prepared and cooked on the premises and the menu takes account of children's individual dietary needs and preferences. Special dietary requirements are met well to ensure children's health is safeguarded with all staff fully informed of children with specific food allergies or preferences. Mealtimes are used as a time of social interaction and a time to promote good table manners with staff generally sitting and talking with children while they eat. Older children participate fully in mealtimes and delight in a self-serve system where they enjoy serving their own meals with support and guidance from staff. Overall, younger children are fully supported by staff with mealtimes used as an opportunity to help them enjoy their food and become independent in feeding themselves although this is not encouraged in the baby room. Children can access drinks at all times and water is freely available. For example, for older children jugs of water and cups are always available and children enjoy pouring themselves a drink when they are thirsty. Staff closely monitor younger children and regularly offer drinks to ensure they remain hydrated.

Children participate in a varied range of activities which contributes to their physical health and promotes a positive attitude towards exercise. They develop self-confidence in their physical ability as they are able to use a varied range of indoor and outdoor equipment on a daily basis. Resources allow children to run, jump, climb and balance. Children show expertise as they ride on bikes and skilfully manoeuvre around obstacles or throw and catch balls. Children are learning that physical exercise can be fun and enjoy music and movement sessions or playing on the 'soft play' equipment in the physical play room. Children have some opportunities to learn about the physical effects exercise can have on their body. They talk about how they feel warm after running in the outside play area and feel their pulse to see how fast it is beating. Younger children have clear space to practise their crawling and walking skills and staff support and generally encourage very young children as they develop control over their bodies. Children

can rest or sleep according to their needs with babies regularly checked when asleep although the information is not always recorded. Staff ensure they are aware of babies individual sleep preferences such as if they have a favourite toy or blanket to go to sleep with.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a child-friendly environment where they can move around safely because staff have a secure knowledge of health and safety procedures. There is a designated member of staff responsible for health and safety. They oversee and support staff and ensure the nursery's health and safety policies and procedures are implemented correctly and to a high standard. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because staff are vigilant and any potential risks are identified and addressed immediately. Written risk assessments are in place and appropriate safety precautions are taken such as using safety gates where needed. Also, regular emergency evacuation practises are carried out to ensure children remain safe in an emergency. Supervising entry to the nursery is well managed by staff with clear security systems in place including a secure coded front door and CCTV to monitor key areas. Consequently, no unauthorised persons can gain access to the premises and children remain safe and are not put at risk. Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves and others safe with staff explaining safe practices. For example, explaining to a young child why it is important to pick up a dropped toy before someone falls over it and hurts themselves or breaks the toy. Or reminding children how to safely use the climbing frame so they don't slip or fall and hurt themselves.

Children can independently access a varied range of safe resources and activities. Toys and equipment are developmentally appropriate and sufficiently challenging so children are interested and motivated in their play. Areas are organised to encourage children's independence and to promote their development and learning. For example, low-level storage units are used to encourage children to freely access resources. Resources are well maintained and regularly checked for breakages by staff to ensure they are clean and safe. Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a secure knowledge of child protection and give priority to children's safety and welfare. There is an informative child protection policy in place which all staff are aware of and know how to implement. Children are protected from harm and neglect because staff are aware of recording and reporting procedures if they had any concerns and there are two designated members of staff responsible for child protection and who support and guide the staff team. Consequently, children remain safe and are not at risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Younger children's learning is generally promoted because the staff have a sound knowledge of child development and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children's development is monitored through regular observations of individual children's play and achievements. Keyworkers then record these in their key children's individual portfolios which are maintained by each child's keyworker and are made available to parents. Children are regularly observed and assessed by their keyworkers to see how they are progressing. Assessment records are linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and overall, clearly show how children are progressing and what their next stages of learning are. Activities are planned in line with the framework and overall, children are experiencing a varied range of activities and play opportunities which are developmentally appropriate and positively contribute to their

development and learning. There is a balance of free play and more structured play opportunities. However, in the baby room play experiences are not usually planned and the framework is generally not used. Consequently, very young children's individual developmental needs are not promoted and their progress is potentially hindered.

Staff know the children and their families well and children feel at ease in the nursery environment. They happily separate from their parents and carers at the beginning of the day. Younger children regularly enjoy sensory play with opportunities to explore paint, water, sand and other mediums. For example, toddlers delight in playing with cornflour and enjoy feeling the smooth consistency between their fingers. They are interested by the texture of dry sand as they pour it from one container to another and enjoy digging in the garden and watering the plants. Staff encourage and develop children's early communication skills such as when looking at books together and reading stories. However, although babies' care needs are met, there are limited opportunities for them to explore their environment or regularly participate in a range of stimulating and developmentally appropriate play experiences and consequently they tend to become frustrated and bored.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage which ensures children are able to participate in activities that enable them to make progress in all areas of their learning. Children are motivated in their play and making good progress towards the early learning goals with resources organised to allow children to make choices and gain independence. Staff provide opportunities to encourage children to think and to demonstrate what they know and understand and are able to intervene to provide explanations when needed. Staff build trusting relationships with children and are very supportive. They talk about safety and behaviour within routines and children's behaviour is managed in a calm manner which develops children's self-esteem.

A keyworker system is used and staff regularly observe and assess their key children to identify their achievements and progress over time. Each child attending the nursery has their own portfolio and children's assessments are part of their portfolio. Assessment records are linked to the stepping stones and clearly show how children are progressing. Consequently, children's learning is promoted because staff have a clear understanding of the developmental needs of individual children. Information gained from children's assessments is used to inform future planning. Curriculum planning includes long, medium and short term plans and is linked to the six areas of learning. It is informative and overall reflects a balanced curriculum. Short term planning is linked to the stepping stone and 'focus' activities have clear learning intentions. This includes how activities can be adapted for children who learn at different rates. Activities are evaluated at the end of each week and this information is used to inform future planning and children's assessment records. Subsequently, activities are planned which identify the developmental needs of individual children and ensure children make progress towards the early learning goals.

Children arrive happy, quickly settle and engage in activities. They are aware of boundaries and behavioural expectations such as knowing how many can play in the role play area at any one time or sharing and taking turns. Children show excellent independence skills through being able to freely access their environment. For example, going to the toilet on their own, helping themselves to drinks of water and being actively involved in serving their own meals. Children can freely move between the indoor and the outdoor play areas which also promotes independent choice and development. They keenly help to tidy away toys and are praised by staff for helping

which develops their confidence and self-esteem. Children eagerly participate in activities and are keen and motivated to learn. They have regular opportunities to experience music, imaginative play and explore varied materials and media on a daily basis. Children can freely access drawing and writing materials. They regularly enjoy art and craft activities including cutting and sticking and painting. They use their imaginations such as when playing in the role play area which has been adapted into a den and children delight in being wild animals.

Children have opportunities to learn about and understand the world around them. For example, they learn about the environment and enjoy gardening and recently were able to pick some ripe tomatoes they had grown in their garden. Children learn about past and present through talking about their families and develop a sense of belonging as they sometimes go for walks in the local community. Children have access to some resources that develop their knowledge of technology although these are limited and do not sufficiently support their learning. However, the setting is fully aware of this and have plans to increase resources so children have opportunities to use information and communication technology and programmable toys in the near future. Mathematical concepts are reinforced through books, singing and counting during the daily routine. Children show confidence and understanding in their mathematical learning through varied activities which involve numbers, shapes patterns and some problem solving. Children have opportunities to explore concepts such as quantity and volume. For example, through planned activities using dry pasta, sand or water play.

Children listen and respond with enjoyment when listening to stories, songs and rhymes. They understand that print carries meaning and are becoming familiar with the written word such as, on coat pegs and labelled toy boxes. Name cards are currently not used but there are plans to re-introduce them as another way of familiarising children with their names. Children have some opportunities to link sounds to letters such as, when playing with magnetic letters and identifying what letters are in their name. Children's physical skills are fostered well with regular opportunities to exercise within the daily routine. Physical play is incorporated in the planning of children's activities. Resources allow children to travel around or under and over balancing and climbing equipment. They show control as they run and jump and they move with control and co-ordination as they manoeuvre around obstacles such as when riding their bikes. Children learn about health and bodily awareness. For example, staff discuss changes to their bodies such as being hot after running.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others is promoted through the range of resources and the activities they can take part in. For example, children begin to appreciate the customs and cultures of others through learning about festivals such as Chinese New Year or Divali. Children develop positive attitudes towards others as they select from the available resources reflecting diversity. Displays and posters throughout the nursery reflect positive images and help children to become aware of the wider world. Children have regular opportunities to learn about the local community. For example, visits to a local children's park to play or to feed the ducks and occasional visits to the shops. People are invited in to talk about their role in the local community. For example, when the nursery completed a topic called 'people who help us' they enjoyed visits from the fire brigade.

Children play well together and behaviour is dealt with in a positive and consistent manner by staff. They talk with children about helping each other in their play and children are beginning to share, take turns and behave considerately towards others. For example, staff sensitively

explain to a child that it is not a good idea to throw a toy because it might hit someone and hurt them or the toy may be broken. Children are taught to be polite to others and staff are good role models. Children can be regularly heard saying 'please' and 'thank-you'. Staff have highly effective systems in place to provide appropriate care and support to children who have English as an additional language. They work in close partnership with parents to ensure children's individual needs are met. Excellent strategies are in place for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The special needs co-ordinator is proactive in ensuring that appropriate action is taken when a child is identified with or admitted with a particular need. There are also two staff in the process of increasing their knowledge of special needs through training. They will then provide additional support to the staff team in identifying and meeting the individual needs of children attending the nursery. All children are fully included and their families are supported. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the effective relationships that staff have developed with parents and this significantly contributes to their well-being. A clear settling-in programme ensures children settle well and become secure in their surroundings. Children's individual needs are effectively met as staff obtain information from parents prior to their child starting at the nursery. Children's daily achievements are discussed with parents and parents of younger children receive detailed written information about their child's day. A welcome pack, informative notice boards and regular newsletters are also used to inform parents about the nursery. Information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage is also shared with parents. Staff actively encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning. For example, requests are sometimes made for items from home for a current theme or topic. Also, plans are displayed and a large whiteboard is used to inform parents of what activities their children are participating in. Parents are welcomed into the setting and children's achievements are verbally shared with parents on a daily basis. Regular parents evenings are also used as another way of discussing children's development and progress on a more formal basis. Parents questionnaires are used as a way of monitoring the quality of care and education provided and feedback from parents has been positive. Also, parents spoken to at inspection felt the nursery environment is inviting and spoke positively of staff and felt fully informed of the progress their children are making.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Recruitment procedures ensure children are cared for by staff who have the relevant qualifications, skills and experience to do their jobs well. Children are safeguarded because appropriate checks are completed on all staff and information is recorded correctly. Any persons such as visitors who have not been vetted would not have unsupervised access to children and all staff are fully aware of this. Children are cared for by staff who have a secure knowledge of child development and a very high percentage of staff hold an early years childcare qualification. Priority is given to staff development and training needs are identified through staff appraisals and immediately addressed. Clear induction systems ensure staff are fully informed of the settings policies and procedures and overall these are implemented well. Documentation for the efficient and safe management of the setting and to promote children's welfare, care and learning is in place and organised well and kept up-to-date.

The leadership and management is good. Staff are guided by the very effective and efficient leadership of the manager. She has a clear vision of the needs of children and is committed to ensuring children are safe, well cared for and making good progress in their learning. She leads

by example and is a positive role model. The manager values her staff team and knows and utilises their skills well. Staff are supported through regular staff meetings. Information gained from staff and parent questionnaires and staff meetings are used as a way of monitoring and evaluating the quality of care and education provided within the setting. All recommendations raised at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Overall, the needs of children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure all required documentation was up-to-date and made available to parents including information about the Foundation Stage. The setting was also asked to promote children's independence including the management of their own personal hygiene skills through the daily routine. Both recommendations have been successfully addressed.

Documentation for the efficient and safe management of the provision is in place and well-organised. Children's welfare, care and learning are promoted because effective systems are in place to ensure all documentation is regularly reviewed and updated. Parents receive comprehensive information about the nursery and this includes information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. Consequently, parents are well informed and able to work in close partnership with the nursery to promote their children's learning.

Children's independence skills are promoted and they are able to make independent choices. The daily routine, resources and equipment have been organised to develop children's independence. They are encouraged to access all areas of the environment and staff supervise and support children to enable them to do this while ensuring their safety and well-being are protected. For example, in the pre-school children can regularly be observed putting on their own aprons for a painting activity or confidently going to the toilet and washing their hands on their own. They freely move from the indoor to the outdoor environment in their play and delight in taking an active role in serving their own lunches. Younger children's independence skills are generally promoted as they make choices in their play and are beginning to learn how to wash their hands or put on their shoes.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to develop staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage and to review planning systems to ensure they are sufficiently challenging. Both recommendations have been successfully achieved.

All staff working in the pre-school have undergone Foundation Stage training and consequently now have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to implement the curriculum. Planning systems have been reviewed and greatly improved and now ensures that children take part in a balanced curriculum to enable them to make progress in all areas of their learning. Children's individual learning needs are met because staff regularly observe and assess children and children's assessment records are used to inform planning. Planning shows clear learning intentions and how activities will be adapted for children who learn at different rates including ensuring activities are sufficiently challenging. Consequently, children are making good progress in their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been two complaints made to Ofsted.

Ofsted received a complaint that raised concerns regarding staff to child ratios and staff qualifications.

A childcare inspector conducted an unannounced visit to the provision on 23 June 2006 to inspect against National Standard 2 (Organisation).

At the time of the visit there were no concerns about staff ratios or qualifications. However one action under National Standard 2 was given in relation to staff deployment as follows: -

Ensure staff are deployed appropriately in the pre-school room to maintain the welfare and development of children at all times.

A satisfactory response has been received to the action and the provider remains qualified for registration.

On 02 March 2007 Ofsted received a concern regarding the provision not maintaining correct staff to child ratios. An unannounced visit was carried out on 22 March 2007 to investigate the concern under National Standard 2 (Organisation).

The visit showed that ratios were being maintained however the recording of staff deployment did not reflect what had taken place. As a result of the investigation the provider was given one action under National Standard 2 (Organisation) as follows:

Ensure staff rotas accurately reflect staff deployment and show how correct staff to child ratios are maintained at all times.

Ofsted expects a response to the actions by 10 April 2007. Ofsted received a satisfactory response to the action and 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 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 and improve hygiene procedures to ensure they are consistently high in all areas of the nursery including the baby room
- plan and provide a range of stimulating and appropriate activities and play opportunities to promote very young children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

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):

- further develop opportunities for children to learn about information and communication technology.

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