



Princess Christian Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289906
Inspection date	22 September 2005
Inspector	Margaret Coyne
Setting Address	North Herts College, London Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1GG
Telephone number	01438 722563
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Registered person	Nord Anglia Nurseries Limited
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 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?

Princess Christian also known as Leap Frog Day Nursery is one of several run by the Nord Anglia Nursery chain. The nursery has been open since 1997, but was taken over by this company in 2004. It operates from 9 rooms in a purpose built building. It is situated in Stevenage, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 114 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30 to 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to secure outdoor play areas.

There are currently 70 children aged from 3 months to under eight years on roll. Of these 25 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area in and around Stevenage. The nursery currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 19 staff, 14 of the staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are 5 staff working towards an appropriate qualification. Staff receive on-going training and support. The nursery receive support from a training officer in education and the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. Older children have a very good awareness of how and why we wash our hands and when it is important to do so. For example, before meals and snacks and after messy activities. Younger children develop their understanding through watching others, discussion and through the positive role modelling of adults. The children are protected from infection through well managed hygiene routines which are practised by the nursery. For example, the nappy changing routines, the sick child policy and the good practice by staff as they wear aprons and disposable gloves when changing nappies. Overall the high standard of cleanliness throughout the nursery contributes to the children's good health. However, outdoor shoes are worn in the baby room and the carpet in this area is slightly soiled. Toys throughout the nursery are maintained to a good standard. However, no record is kept of a cleaning rota in all areas. Staff are well informed about children's health issues and all relevant records and documents are in place. A high percentage of staff hold first aid certificates and are aware of how to administer first aid to the children. All required records and documents are in place to maintain children's good health.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. Children are provided with varied, nutritious meals in accordance to their needs and any allergies or dietary requirements are complied with. The food provided is ample for the children and there are second and third helpings for those who want it. The menu is well planned to ensure it offers nutritious choices. Children have opportunity to enjoy meals in line with their hours of attendance. Older children confidently help themselves to breakfast items and can take part in food preparation at snack and tea times. Children operate independently pouring their own drinks and serving themselves as they are able. Babies are fed in line with personal routines and by consistent carers which helps them relate to an adult and become contented. Children are introduced to new tastes and experiences through meals and activities. Children learn about healthy food through topics and discussions. For example, children join in talking about the Healthy Caterpillar discussing their favourite foods and what was good for them. Some children had unique ideas about this as they shared their ideas such as MacDonald's and shortcake biscuits.

Children enjoy an extensive and stimulating range of equipment to promote a healthy

life and their physical development. The garden has been well planned to provide activities which encourage the children to use their bodies to keep fit and healthy in all weathers. Children move with confidence and skill as they ride scooters, cars and bikes and climb and balance on the equipment. They thoroughly enjoy the indoor soft play room and roll, tumble and crawl around the equipment. Staff create obstacle courses for the children both indoors and outdoors. Children learn to navigate these as they balance bean bags, manoeuvre through cones and walk along the footprints. Children's dexterity and hand and eye coordination is developed as they enjoy playing with small world figures, manipulate magnetic trains building train tracks cooperatively together and cut, glue and paint using a variety of tools. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' guidance well to provide a good range of physical play experiences for babies and younger children. They reach for the colourful mobiles hanging in their rooms and are learning to express themselves in different ways in order to make their wants and needs known. Children are encouraged to nap and sleep as required and babies follow their routine from home. This benefits all children as individual sleep patterns are observed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is paramount to the organisation of the nursery. Staff recognise hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. Systematic risk assessments are carried out and all staff share in the responsibility for keeping the children safe. Accident records are maintained and shared with parents. This information is correlated for risk assessments in order to recognise and reduce risks to the children. The setting is well planned with lots of space for children to move freely and safely around activities and areas. Well implemented safety and security precautions are in place to promote and safeguard the children's welfare. Staff help children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe in the nursery as they explain and practise simple procedures such as emergency evacuation and explain the boundaries necessary to keep children safe such as not throwing sand and picking toys up so others won't trip and fall. Staff effectively explain safety to the children in a simple but positive manner aimed at their level of understanding so they can operate safely within their environment. Children have taken part in a road safety topic which has given them a clear insight into being safe on the roads. They have enjoyed visits from 'people who help us' such as a lollypop lady, the fire service and ambulance service. Today the police visited to talk to the children about keeping themselves safe and who to approach if they became lost or frightened. Children related well to this discussion joining in retelling stories and events. Babies and young children are provided with safe areas to enjoy both inside and outside. Supervision is high and any sleeping children are checked regularly.

Children use a broad range of safe, good quality, age-appropriate toys, furniture and equipment. These are well organised throughout the nursery in child height stages to encourage children to become independent and gain safe access to their resources. Children play an active role in their own safety notifying an adult if something is broken. Sensitive reminders by staff encourage the children to share in the responsibility for their own safety and that of others. Children show respect for their

toys and equipment and eagerly help to tidy items away.

Children's welfare is safe guarded and promoted through current policies and procedures for the protection of children. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection and all procedures are up to date. Staff are encouraged to extend and update their understanding by attending additional training. Their good practice guide ensures any concerns are dealt with in a sensitive manner and a designated person is responsible to share information with outside agencies to ensure children are protected at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, contented and secure throughout the nursery. They confidently access the stimulating and challenging range of activities and are forming secure relationships with the staff and other children. Staff have a sound awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this has a positive effect on the younger children's achievements. Staff plan activities in line with this framework and have gained a secure knowledge about what children can learn. Babies and young children receive lots of cuddles and have developed strong bonds with their key workers which increases their sense of well-being and contentment. They clearly benefit from the routines which are consistent with those at home. They enjoy the various activities such as treasure baskets, exploring natural objects and the manufactured toys with bright colours and noises. Babies and young children develop their communication skills as they respond to others around them. With the use of verbal and non-verbal language they make their needs known to staff who are adept at interpreting their needs. Children of all ages and abilities use a range of creative materials such as paint, sticking, collages, playdough, and other messy activities. Children learn through these experiences and are directly involved and interested in their play. However there are limited resources available for the younger children to develop their imaginations within familiar role play situations and for babies to develop mobility. Children of all ages learn about responsibilities and are allowed to make errors, decisions and choices as they select activities and share their play with others.

Children exhibit high levels of confidence and security and this has been achieved by the consistent support and direction of practitioners. Older children are able to resolve their differences when any conflicts arise. They are encouraged to talk about it and find their own solutions. This provides children with tools to become aware of others and negotiate differences. Younger children often seek out staff to share experiences with or to gain support for an activity.

Attractive displays all around the nursery give children pride in their work. Low level displays encourage children to talk about their work. For example the spider in his web, mini beasts and road safety. Practitioners throughout the nursery make the experiences enjoyable and meaningful for the children which in turn aids their concentration and confidence to participate.

Children are receptive to the constant praise and encouragement that is provided by

staff. This has a clear impact on their self-esteem and encourages them to try new tasks and participate in activities. Children of all ages and abilities develop a concept of counting, sorting, shape, colour and problem solving through the very well planned and managed activities on offer.

Nursery Education

Children are engaged and happy in both their structured learning sessions and their free play time. They have a strong sense of belonging as they greet each other and seek out friends to share play with. Behaviour is very good as the children know the routines and what is expected of them. Children appear to show concern for others and this was demonstrated well during an obstacle course when one child dropped the bean bag. Another child said 'don't worry it's not your fault it's the bean bag's' This showed genuine concern for the feelings of the other child. Children enjoy using language in their imaginative play and during group discussion. They enjoy books and one child enjoyed reading a story to another child. Children are learning sounds of letters and can recognise some familiar words. However this is not extended with the use of labels on familiar objects around the room. Children are confident counters and can recognise written numbers, count and match objects and are becoming adept at simple problem solving. For example, children work out which objects will sink or float. Staff provide children with opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They have fun with the mini beasts topic and extend this to exploring in the garden looking for insects, discovering where they live, what they eat and how they move. Bertie and Barnie bears accompany the children on their holidays and share the experiences with the other children using photographs and postcards. Children use their own experiences during role play as they take part in familiar situations, such as a Post Office. Other creative activities give children a sense of achievement as they are able to create spontaneously using their own imaginations and skills. Children creatively used their imaginations as they transformed the figure eight into different objects such as glasses, and a butterfly. Using a pre-drawn stick man children developed the picture to show different poses and situations. This clearly demonstrates how children think for themselves using their imaginations. Music and instruments are also available and this is reflected in the planning.

Children's achievements are clearly linked to the stepping stones. Staff use on-going observations extremely well to plan the next steps in children's learning. Each child has a portfolio containing examples of their work, photographs and clear comments from staff to provide more detailed observations about a child's progress. A topic report gives a full evaluation under the six areas of learning to help identify any gaps in a child's progress and allows for parents to make comments and observations.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff enrich the experiences for all children with well planned activities and resources. They have a good awareness of children's starting points and use this to plan the next steps in their development. Consistent staff impacts on children's high levels of confidence and security. Children enjoy circle time and break into smaller groups for structured learning using the 'Key to Learning' framework and key staff. Excellent deployment of staff within these learning sessions aids children's concentration, fun and learning. Staff know the children well, know when to step back and let the children take over an activity. A

realistic balance has been created between adult-led and child-initiated play giving children tools to succeed in most given tasks. Staff are excellent role models and inspire, praise and encourage children to try things for themselves. They encourage children to gain the confidence to succeed and support them well as they aspire to do so. Children are progressing very well, supported by the staff's team confidence and secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the 'Key to Learning' ethos. Planning is detailed and covers all areas of learning comprehensively. This gives a clear picture of the aims and objectives of each activity and an evaluation ensures it is meeting the needs of all children. Staff are enthusiastic and this impacts on the children's enjoyment and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to a meaningful range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity. Children take part in a range of activities of both familiar and unfamiliar festivals and celebrations. For example, Christmas, Easter, Chinese New Year and Diwali. Staff have very positive attitudes and present themselves as sensitive role models which in turn helps children relate to others and gain a secure understanding of the needs of others. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and supports the educational program the older children receive. All children are valued and respected as individuals and all their needs are well documented and implemented. Children thrive in their environment where they are engaged and nurtured free from any type of stereotyping. Staff recognise that at some time all children will exhibit a 'special need'. This could be a developmental need or personal need. Not all needs are educational and staff are clearly committed to supporting each and every child in order to meet their needs. No children are attending at present with a special educational need however all systems are in place to support any child. Detailed pre-registration forms gain full information from parents about each child in order to fully meet their needs.

Children have a thoughtful understanding of the boundaries within the nursery and respond to direction from adults in a positive fashion. They eagerly respond to the consistent approach followed by all adults and this impacts clearly on their security and confidence as they know what is expected of them. Children develop high levels of self-esteem and are able to resolve differences and gain an understanding between right and wrong. This also has the effect of building their managing skills and self-reliance. Highly effective behaviour management defuses situations and distracts and engages children in worthwhile activities. Children share in the responsibility for their own behaviour as they learn to listen to others, share and wait turns and being kind to our friends. Staff are caring role models for the children, creating a calm, positive, fun and interesting environment in which they thrive. Children are heard to use the same positive language in their play and discussions with each other. For example, when more than four children want to play in the water tray they negotiate turns and use a sand timer to help them understand when it is their turn. Staff have high expectations for all children and are consistent in their behaviour management.

A good partnership with parents contributes significantly to the children's sense of belonging, security and well being. Parents play an active role in their child's care and a two way sharing of information is encouraged with the use of daily communication sheets. Parents are invited to regular open days and events. Staff are extremely approachable and friendly, making parents feel secure and at ease, confident with the care provided for their child. Parents are fully informed about their child's progress and achievements and their involvement impacts greatly on the children's good health, safety, care and learning. Parents have access to the 'Birth to three matters' packs and can gain valuable information about how the nursery implements this. Videos are taken of the children at play and parents are able to borrow these to gain further insight into a typical day at the nursery. When dropping off, some parents observed being very positive with staff. This impacts on the children's sense of security and confidence.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the sound quality of organisation and therefore the leadership and management of the nursery is good. This benefits the children as they move through the nursery from baby room to pre-school. The manager and deputy continually enhance their knowledge through extensive training and provide a thorough training program for all staff. The management team are responsible for all aspects of the nursery including staff supervision and employment, ratios and deployment, operational plan, staff training and qualifications. All staff have a considerable knowledge of the National Standards which they are committed to applying throughout the nursery. This is enhanced with their knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. High regard for the well being of the children, their group sizes, adult support and well planned activities, contribute to children's well being, enjoyment and achievements. The manager, deputy manager and room leaders work extremely well together and have built a positive, motivated, and dedicated staff team. The organisation of staff across the nursery includes a sensitive mix between young and mature staff and enables them to share experiences and enrich and promote the care and experiences provided for the children.

The premises are very well organised. Indoor and outdoor space is effectively arranged to maximize the play opportunities for children, contributing to the extensive, imaginative and safe environment the children enjoy.

Highly effective organisation of all records and documents ensures children's welfare and enables parents to play an active role in their child's care. All staff are committed to the continuous evaluation and improvement of their practice. They regularly monitor and improve the quality of their care through comprehensive evaluations. All complaints are logged and procedures are met including a written response to any complainant. The manager works closely with the Leap frog management team to revise policies and procedures for the whole nursery chain and implements the practice within this nursery. She attends in-house training to ensure all company policies can be adhered to and put into practice. Overall the needs of the children attending are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Concerns raised about staffing ratios within the baby room. This related to National Standard 2: Organisation. Ofsted made an unannounced visit on 15th June 2005 and as a result set 1 action under standard 2: ensure that there is a system in place for registering children and staff attendance on a daily basis, detailing their hours of attendance and ensure that this is completed consistently. This action will be checked at next inspection. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- ensure a suitable hygiene procedure is in place and implemented in the baby room with regard to the wearing of indoor shoes and the maintenance of the carpet. Also ensuring a cleaning rota is in place for all toys and equipment
- increase resources for children from 0 to 3 years to develop their imaginations with familiar role play situations and to provide some domestic style furniture in the baby room to develop mobility and continue normal life experiences

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):

- extend the use of labels around the room to increase children's awareness of word recognition with familiar objects.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the

procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website:
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