

Leapfrog Day Nursery - Leicester, Carlton Park

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY241078
Inspection date	11 March 2008
Inspector	Jean Suff
Setting Address	Carlton Park, King Edward Avenue, Narborough, Leicester, LE19 0LF
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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 was registered in 2002. It is part of the national chain of Leapfrog nurseries, which is part of the Busy Bees group. The setting operates from a purpose built two-storey building, and is situated within Carlton Park, Narborough, in Leicestershire. The ground floor accommodates children under two years old. The first floor consists of two group rooms for children aged two to three years, and a large pre-school room for three to five-year-olds.

There are currently 131 children on roll. This includes 32 funded three-year-olds and five funded four-year-olds. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language.

The nursery is open from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday throughout the year. Additional hours are available if required. Children attend a variety of sessions.

The nursery employs 26 staff who work with the children, including the manager. Of these, 14 hold recognised early qualifications and four staff members are currently undertaking training.

The setting receives support from the local authority through the Leicestershire Early Years Development Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in warm, clean and well-maintained premises so helping to support their health. Staff practices generally minimise the risk of cross-infection. For example, staff wear plastic aprons to prepare and serve snacks and suitable nappy changing procedures are in place. Linen used for bedding is washed weekly and stored in an individual bag for each child. Some hygiene practices across the nursery are not consistent. For example, older children learn about hygiene routines as they are encouraged to wash and dry their hands using disposable paper towels before eating. Babies and toddlers, however, do not have their hands and faces washed before or after eating snacks. This increases the risk of the spread of infection.

Records are maintained of children's individual health and dietary needs and staff are familiar with these so enabling them to manage specific conditions appropriately. Children are looked after well in the event of becoming ill at the nursery. For example, they are comforted and made comfortable until their parents arrive. Adequate numbers of staff hold current first aid qualifications and first aid supplies are accessible. However, children are not sufficiently protected as staff do not record all accidents or notify parents.

Children are well-nourished. They enjoy a balanced and varied diet that promotes their growth and development. For example, children readily eat Mexican chicken or vegetables with rice followed by sponge pudding and custard. Children learn to make healthy choices as they are offered a choice of fruit at snack time. Meals are prepared in the nursery's on-site kitchen and menus are displayed for parents to see so that they are aware of meals being offered to children. Age-appropriate systems are in place for children to access water throughout the day to ensure they remain hydrated and comfortable.

Most children have regular access to the outdoor area so are able to exercise and play in the fresh air. They are developing good physical skills as they ride wheeled vehicles, climb, slide and play running games. Older children balance on tyres and logs, dig and fork soil, look for bugs and listen to the sounds of Spring in the exploratory area. Pre-school children are also encouraged to develop their hand-eye coordination as they handle small tools, puzzle pieces and use a variety of drawing implements.

Babies' physical and emotional needs are met well. For example, they are held closely when taking milk feeds and sleep according to their individual needs which promotes consistency of care. Staff quickly get to know the babies and respond immediately to signals such as a turn of the head or a cry.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a light, bright and welcoming purpose-built environment. Corridors and stairways are decorated with a variety of well-displayed children's work and information for parents. Good sized play spaces are provided for each age range of children with space arranged within each area for children to be active, rest or relax. Toys and resources are suitable

for the ages and stages of development of the children who attend the nursery. Equipment is checked and washed regularly so ensuring children's safety. Babies have a good range of toys that are easily accessible so promoting their independence. The nursery has a range of equipment such as child-sized tables and chairs, activity centres and play mats that allow children to play comfortably and safely. Suitable arrangements are in place for children to safely rest or sleep on cushions, sleep mats or in cots. Older children feel recognised as individuals as staff provide named low pegs for outdoor clothes and encourage children to use their individual trays.

A number of sensible safety precautions are in place to help minimise risks to children. For example, the outside doors are kept secured, a security system is in place and parent's sign out in their child's base room on collection so ensuring children do not leave the building with an unknown adult. Risk assessments are in place and are being refined further to include incidents and accidents. The outdoor play space is safe, secure and well-maintained. For example, an all weather surface has been laid, the exploratory area is separately fenced off and trees have been recently cut back to ensure the safety of children from falling branches. Children practise regular fire drills which are recorded and monitored in order to protect children in the case of a fire. Children begin to learn how to keep themselves safe as they welcome visitors to the nursery and further their knowledge of issues such as road safety or walking with a guide dog. Babies' safety is promoted as they are checked regularly as they sleep and are reminded not to put sticky paper in their mouth as it is bad for their tummy. Sufficient staffing ensures that children are supervised although staff do not always follow the nursery's procedures that require them to show a specific awareness of children's safety and welfare.

Children are mostly safeguarded as staff have an understanding of their responsibilities towards the children in their care. They have a sound knowledge of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and are aware of the need to pass on any concerns about a child to the relevant authorities. However, staff do not necessarily know the procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against themselves. This limits the nursery's ability to manage any such incident in children's best interests.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally settled and relaxed in the nursery. They are often sufficiently confident to approach staff to talk about their immediate needs and experiences. Babies are actively involved in their play, for example as they handle activity toys with interest, investigate sensory toys, listen to music and stick pieces of paper onto an Easter egg. Staff working with babies take account of children's individual needs, watch them closely and provide further resources to aid development. They make active use of planning related to the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure babies have a generally balanced range of activities and experiences.

Younger children readily become engaged with play materials and activities when they are available to them. They feel, sieve and scoop sand, make marks with paint and listen to stories. They play with bricks, animals and an assortment of vehicles. Staff record their observations of children's activities and stage of development, so helping them maintain an overview of children's achievements. However, staff do not always provide sufficient resources and play activities for children which allow them to develop in all areas. This limits progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a varied range of learning experiences across all areas of learning. However, short-term planning does not necessarily show clear learning intentions linked to the stepping stones and children's assessment records. Staff observe, monitor and record the children's progress in a variety of ways. For example, they carry out planned and spontaneous observations of children and some examples of children's work are kept. Although staff work with children for much of the time they use only a restricted range of strategies and teaching methods that help children to learn effectively. This limits learning.

Children have opportunities to listen to stories and enjoy talking about the things which interest them such as when they went to the swimming pool or when their dad watered the garden. They demonstrate that they understand that print carries meaning as they find significant letters in a magazine or point to writing on a board and say 'That long word says Wednesday'. Some children recognise their names on their coat pegs and older children are starting to write their name on their work.

Children use mathematical language in their play to describe shape, size, quantity and capacity. For example, as they pour sand into containers they use words such as large, small, full and empty. Staff use daily activities and routines to promote children's mathematical development. For example, they count the number of children at an activity and guess how many are 'next door'.

Children are keen to explore resources and find out how things work. They pour water, explore making bubbles and mix cornflour. They show interest in their world as they talk about the weather, holidays and the time the zoo lab came to visit. Children show a good awareness of everyday technology, for example they understand how to operate simple programmes on the computer and use telephones in their play. They serve tea in the home corner, go 'on holiday' and act in role as parents and babies.

Children form good relationships with each other and often seek out others to play with. Children's independence is generally promoted well, for example they are encouraged to put on their own coats to play outside and serve themselves at snack and lunch time.

Children are encouraged to sing, listen to and identify sounds. For example, they listen to the sounds of Spring in the outdoor area. Children take part in a range of planned creative activities and are able to access creative resources freely on a daily basis. They are therefore able to explore different types of media and materials such as paint, collage and glue. Imaginative play is popular and there are suitable resources to support this.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are calm and consistent in their dealings with children, so helping them to feel included and at home. Children are relaxed in their daily dealings with staff and peers, for example as babies show enjoyment by their gestures and facial expressions as they listen to music and stories. Children are able to exercise choice from a selection of activities. Children behave well in a variety of situations, for example, as toddlers sit together for meal times and older children play games together. They begin to take account of each others needs and feelings, as when they pass equipment at the sand tray.

Staff take account of information about children's specific care needs, so helping ensure children's individuality is recognised. Children begin to learn about lifestyles other than their own through a range of play resources that reflect diversity. They taste food from different countries, hear stories from various cultures and see welcome posters representing various languages. The setting has experience of caring for children with a variety of needs and staff recognise the importance of liaising with parents and relevant professionals with regard to provision for any children with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Prospective parents receive well-presented information giving details of arrangements for their children's care. General information, such as nursery routines and menus, is clearly displayed for parents to see. Parents receive regular newsletters informing them about events and there is both an informal and written system in place for the daily exchange of information to support the children's care. Parents fill in forms on entry ensuring staff have essential information to make children's time safe and enjoyable. Staff take good account of parents individual circumstances and children benefit from the positive relationships that exist between parents and staff.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Staff are very welcoming and approachable and answer parents questions fully. Information on the six areas of learning are covered in the prospectus. Parents are able to access children's developmental records if they wish. Systematic arrangements are in place to ensure parents receive information about their children's progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their children and their observations are taken into account when planning activities for children. The nursery continues to establish ways to involve parents meaningfully in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall children's needs are met. There are rigorous procedures in place when employing staff to ensure those working with children are suitable to do so. Staffing is organised so that ratios are always maintained and staff are generally deployed appropriately across the nursery. Staff movement is kept to a minimum to aid continuity of care for children. Some staff understand how children learn best and follow this through with the provision of age-appropriate activities and effective support. Regular staff appraisals ensure that training needs are identified. Resources are generally organised to promote independence and children in the pre-school room are encouraged to self-select. Within each base room there are designated areas for messy play, carpeted areas for floor play and cushioned areas for quieter activities. The outdoor provision further extends the range of activities available to children. There is a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that generally effectively underpin practice and ensure positive outcomes for children. However, staff are not always sufficiently aware of procedures in the operational plan to fully promote children's safety, welfare and development.

The leadership and management of early education is satisfactory. The manager and pre-school leader demonstrate commitment to further improve the quality of nursery education provision for children and are aware of areas they wish to develop. The management team support staff development, encouraging them to attend training either with the local authority or with other nurseries in the group, and to feedback information to other staff which benefits the children. There are some effective systems in place to monitor and promote the quality of teaching and learning. For example, monthly team meetings are held where all attend to discuss planning,

children's progress and areas of development. The setting values the regular support it receives from the local authority.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was given two recommendations. It was asked to ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice and was also asked to improve the provision of books and creative resources, in order to further support the developmental needs of children in the nursery. Although the nursery has recently purchased additional resources these are not necessarily used to best effect to promote children's development. A further recommendation in respect to the use of resources and opportunities offered to children has therefore been raised.

In August 2006 a complaint was received regarding inappropriate handling of children's behaviour and regarding the provider's handling of complaints. An Ofsted inspector visited and investigated under Standard 11 (Behaviour Management), Standard 12 (Partnership with Parents), Standard 13 (Child Protection) and Standard 14 (Documentation). Evidence did not indicate breaches of the standards investigated, but a recommendation was raised regarding each standard to improve practice. The setting was asked to develop arrangements to ensure the written statement on behaviour management is fully understood and followed by all staff, and that guidance of any use of physical intervention accurately reflects the National Standards. Secondly, it was asked to review arrangements to ensure Ofsted is informed at the earliest opportunity of any significant events and/or child protection concerns. Thirdly, the nursery was asked to review arrangements to ensure the complaints procedure accurately reflects regulatory requirements with regard to timescale and ways to ensure staff and parents are familiar with the complaints procedure. These recommendations have been met therefore children's welfare is enhanced.

The setting was also asked to improve awareness of the child protection policy, with particular regard to procedures to be followed in the event of any child protection allegations against staff, to ensure any such allegations are dealt with in accordance with relevant national guidance. Not all staff are fully aware of these procedures therefore a further recommendation with regard to child protection has been raised.

This is the first nursery education inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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 by Ofsted.

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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):

- take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection with regard to hand washing
- ensure all accidents are recorded and parental signatures obtained
- improve staff knowledge of what to do if an allegation were to be made against them
- improve the selection of resources, play opportunities and first-hand experiences which allow children to build on their natural curiosity as learners, develop their language and mathematical thinking and use their imagination
- ensure the operational plan is effectively implemented, with particular reference to behaviour management strategies, staff training and deployment, the provision of activities and children's safety.

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):

- ensure short-term planning shows clear learning intentions linked to the stepping stones and children's assessment records
- develop the range of teaching methods that help children to learn effectively.

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