

Leapfrog Day Nursery - Leicester, Meridian Leisure Park

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289581
Inspection date	11 March 2008
Inspector	Alexandra Brouder
Setting Address	Meridian Leisure Park, Meridian Way, Braunstone, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE19 1JZ
Telephone number	0116 289 3083
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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 2004. It is part of the national chain of Leapfrog nurseries, part of the Busy Bees group. The setting operates from a purpose built single storey building, and is situated within the Meridian Leisure Park, close to junction 21 of the M1 in Leicester and serves a wide surrounding area. Children use interconnecting semi open-plan play areas and associated toileting facilities. Kitchen, office and staff facilities are available. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 130 children aged from birth to eight years may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:45 to 18:00 throughout the year. There are currently 162 children on roll of whom 62 receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language.

32 staff work with children, including the manager. Of these, 26 hold recognised early years qualifications. Four staff members are working towards a qualification. 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 learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. However, this practice is not consistent for children under two as they do not have free access to low-level sinks and staff do not provide other methods to ensure that they can begin to understand and develop their own needs. This impacts on children's risk of infection and cross-contamination. In addition to this, older children's understanding of healthy practises in relation to eating are not promoted effectively. A child was observed to drop a potato on the floor, roll it around, pick it up with a fork and carry on eating it. This was not addressed by staff. Excellent procedures are in place for nappy changing and regular changing of bed linen, ensuring that high levels of hygiene are promoted and the spread of infection between children is reduced. Good procedures are in place to ensure that all accidents, medication and incidents are fully recorded and shared with parents, supporting children's welfare.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy a variety of meals which are nutritionally balanced and planned well to suit the needs and ages of children that attend. For example, fresh vegetables and salad, fresh fish, pasta and meat dishes. Information on children's dietary and religious requirements are obtained before children begin to ensure that they are only offered foods that meet their individual needs. Staff work well with parents of babies to ensure that their weaning is age and stage appropriate and shared at each step to ensure that parents are happy with this process. Older children develop their independence as they choose when they want their snack and help themselves to this on most occasions. All children have access to appropriate utensils at meal times, however, older children's skills are sometimes hindered through staff not supporting appropriately. Good facilities are provided to enable children of all age groups to rest and sleep. All children are offered drinks on a regular basis throughout the day. However, these are not always stored effectively to enable more able children to hydrate themselves independently.

Most children access the outdoor area daily, which contributes to a healthy lifestyle and extends on their physical skills. They enjoy a range of energetic activities and develop their self-confidence as they use a range of indoor and outdoor toys and equipment that are suitable and safe for all age groups at the setting. They begin to explore moving in different ways, for example, toddlers were observed to crawl through tunnels and climb up and down small slides, whilst more able children were observed to expertly manoeuvre bikes and scooters over pavements and grass in the outdoor area. They show an awareness of others space as they stop and start in safety. Children's dexterity develops as they dig for 'bugs' in the outdoor garden and handle an increasing assortment of tools such as paint brushes, chinks, pencils and when putting small interlinking bricks together.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children access a bright, warm and welcoming environment. They settle quickly and easily to their play and have access to a good range of age and stage appropriate resources that effectively support their learning in all areas. Opportunities for children to extend their ideas

are encouraged and toys are stored to enable children of all ages to make independent choices in their play and increase their decision-making skills. For example, in the baby area staff place a range of toys in low-level boxes and tubs to enable them to begin to make a choice, whereas more able children can make choices from drawers and by requesting play items from staff. However, organisation of play areas can sometimes lead to children not taking an active part in play, which can go unseen by staff, leading to children wandering aimlessly at times. This impacts on children's individual learning needs. Good organisation of areas that children under two access ensures that their emotional well-being is well supported. Further more, good ratios in this area promotes their individual needs well enabling them to play and have fun in all that they do. Areas that children access are warm and well ventilated, promoting a positive working and learning environment for all children and staff.

Children's safety is enhanced through good procedures and policies such as risk assessments, secure exits and monthly fire drills. More able children talk about what happens during this, explaining to the inspector that they have to 'listen to staff and walk nicely outside'. Daily registers clearly show when children and staff arrive and depart and regular checks are completed by management throughout the day to ensure that ratios are maintained to support children's welfare effectively. Good documents support children's well-being in the main, with regard to a range of consents, for example, outings and photograph permission, as well as clear information regarding who can collect children from the setting, protecting children's safety.

A useful child protection policy is in place and most staff have attended some child protection training, this also forms a part of staff induction, supporting children's welfare. Sampled staff spoken to were familiar with what child abuse and neglect means and understands their responsibility to follow up any child protection concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and relaxed in the child centred environment. They arrive well and quickly settle into play. Babies and children under two have a separate area from the older children, enabling them to remain safe and play with growing confidence using a range of age and stage appropriate resources. All other age groups access an open plan play area in which they have specific designated areas where they meet, enabling them to develop a sense of belonging. Children's ability to make decisions in their play is developing well and many opportunities are in place to enable them to initiate their own play and access resources to suit their all round skills. However, deployment of staff does not always enhance children's individual learning and there are times that children are allowed to wander aimlessly without this being noted by staff, as well as the organisation of activities not including all children appropriately. This impacts on children's ability to develop their skills at times.

Staff plan using the 'Birth to three matters' framework and Foundation Stage of learning to ensure that the needs of all children are planned for appropriately. Staff observe and assess what children can do to ensure that they make effective progress in their learning. However, this is not always consistent for more able children. Staff know children well and have built good relationships with them. They often spend time talking and playing with children, so helping them feel their activities are valued. They show awareness of the needs of individual children, for example encouraging a younger child to sit at the table to take part in a painting activity.

Babies and young children receive lots of cuddles and have a strong bond with the familiar adults who work with them, thus developing their sense of well-being. They benefit from routines that are consistent with their experiences at home and enjoy a range of toys and equipment. Their senses increase as they explore paints and holistic play baskets and squeal with delight at new experiences and attract the attention of staff through their early communication skills.

Nursery Education

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning for the funded nursery education programme is satisfactory, and children make satisfactory progress towards the six areas of learning. Staff have a sound understanding of the areas of learning identified in the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and recognise that children learn through practical play activities. This helps them to provide a range of activities and experiences generally appropriate to children's needs and interests. Long term planning is in place to ensure a balanced coverage of the six areas of learning is offered throughout the year. Medium term planning is linked to various topics such as fantasy, our bodies and food and offers children varied opportunities to play and be involved in a range of age and stage appropriate activities. Short term planning links to weekly and focused activities. However, these are not consistently evaluated to show what children have learnt or what changes may be needed. Observation and assessments are completed on a regular basis, but staff are not consistently using this information to plan for children's individual learning needs, impacting on the challenge and differentiation offered to more able children. Organisation of activities does not always best support children's individual learning needs which leads to children being easily distracted at times.

Children settle well on entry and are confident to try new activities, which they persist at for extended periods. For example, a four-year-old was observed to play with interlinking bricks for a long period of time, making a 'house' to put the animals in. Children show increasing independence in selecting activities and work well in small groups. Most children listen to instructions when requested by staff, although they are easily distracted in large groups, which tends to be due to the organisation of the environment or deployment of staff. Children develop a growing sense of belonging as they are greeted by staff and view their work in the brightly decorated environment. They begin to show care and concern for each other as they defend their own rights and that of others. For example, a four-year-old informed a member of staff that another child was calling a child names, which they thought was not nice. More able children begin to manage their own behaviour as they were observed to resolve an argument over who was going to play on which bike. This contributes to their self-esteem and confidence. Children have very good communication skills, in the main, and use this skill with confidence, to question visitors to the setting, asking questions such as, 'why are you here' and 'what are you writing about'. Children enjoy singing and some children were observed to sing as they play. Children show an awareness of rhyme and alliteration as they were heard to say 'hairy, beary, Mary bear' when looking at a book. Staff recognise that some children have difficulty with their communication skills and work well with parents and outside agencies to ensure that these skills can develop using other forms of communication, for example, picture cards. Children handle books well and know that print carries meaning, although opportunities to extend their awareness of print in the written form are not always challenged effectively. More able children begin to know and say the initial sound in words such as 'm' for mummy and 'd' for daddy and point out familiar letters that they see. Opportunities for children to mark-make are many and children were observed to 'copy' the inspector as they had a notebook and pen and made notes.

Children show a developing interest in mathematics as they count together at adult-led activities, up to 20, and as they count the number of bricks that they have, up to 12. Children were observed to practise simple calculation as a member of staff asked the children how many cups they needed at lunch. A child counted around the table and stated 'five'. All children stated that they wanted a pink cup, the staff member only had one cup, and she asked how many more she would need. A four-year-old stated 'four more'. However, these skills are not always consistently encouraged, leading to missed opportunities. Children begin to recognise shapes in day-to-day activities as they draw round circles, rectangles and squares and know what these are. Children are knowledgeable about the world in which they live and enjoy taking an active part in planned activities to learn about others. For example, today they were looking through a range of books about other cultures and lifestyles, talking together about what people were wearing and the types of homes they lived in. In addition to this, more able children know that they live in England and point to this on a map. Children have regular access to information and technology equipment and confidently enjoy using simple computer programmes, or operating battery controlled equipment such as a play till. They remember and talk about significant things that have happened to them, for example, a child was talking to me about a visit to a farm, looking at all the animals and playing on the park.

Children's health and bodily awareness develops as they recognise their personal needs such as when they need the toilet and some discuss what foods are good for them and what are not. Two children were discussing whether crisps were good for them or not, one child stated emphatically that they were not good for them at all as 'my mum told me'. They construct with a range of materials, both large and small and handle small tools such as scissors, in safety. Their creative skills develop as photographic evidence shows them exploring their senses using a range of media such as play dough, compost and pasta. They show enjoyment as they explore water play and dig for 'bugs' in the outdoor garden. Their imaginative skills are developing well as they use a range of props to support their play in various role play areas such as shops and the home corner. All children are encouraged to dress up and do so with enthusiasm, irrespective of their gender. They join in with well known songs and rhymes and delight in singing these, sometimes using a range of musical instruments to support this.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children across the age range settle well and quickly to their desired play activity. They develop a positive attitude to others and build warm relationships with staff and their peers as they access a good range of resources that represent the children who attend, as well as those from the wider community. Varied activities help to introduce children to the festivals of others in the setting as well as those of the wider world. For example, Diwali, Holi and Hanukah. In addition to this, parents of children whose first language is not English were asked to come in and introduce the children to simple words from their first language. Good systems are in place to ensure that children's individual needs are known by staff who will work with them and these are met well, increasing all children's sense of belonging and enabling them to settle quickly. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs met well within the inclusive environment. Staff work hard to ensure that any specific needs are identified and work with parents and other professionals to establish how the requirements of any child with identified needs can be met. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is good. They begin to understand the rules for working together and more able children confidently manage their own disagreements, without the support of adults.

For example, a group of children outside were observed to disagree about who was having the larger bike. A discussion took place and an agreement was made to take it in turns. This supports children's growing confidence and self-esteem. Younger, less able children learn how to behave through good role modelling by staff, for example, as staff listen to children and support their individual needs well. More able children show care and consideration for younger children as they are observed to hold their hands as they take them to the bathroom to wash their hands.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Extensive information is shared with them through the comprehensive nursery prospectus and parents information boards throughout the setting. Sampled parents speak favourably of the welcoming staff and child-centred environment. In addition to this, parents and carers feel that staff take time to get to know their child and ensure that their individual needs are met. Parents of children who receive funded nursery education feel that their children are learning well and that good information is in place to ensure that they are well informed of what their children are doing and what they have learnt. Children's emotional needs are well met as the nursery works with parents to ensure that time is given to help children settle into the nursery, helping to avoid any separation anxiety. This policy is then adopted when children move from room to room, allowing children and parents to be secure with any changes that occur. Daily written reports, as well as verbal information, is shared with parents and carers of children under two, ensuring that they have a good insight into their child's day. Parents and carers of children over two have verbal feedback with their child's carer each day. All children have a written report given to parents on a regular basis, sharing information on their progress. Parents are invited to view these and make any comments that they feel would help support their child further at the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment by staff that are appropriately qualified and experienced in childcare. Sound recruitment procedures ensures that staff are suitable and offered training opportunities to develop their individual learning and abilities. Organisation of the play environments and deployment of staff supports the needs of children under two very well. However, this is not so for children over two as activities and staffing are not always organised to best support the needs of some children, which leads to missed opportunities for some age groups and children not being involved in play at times.

Necessary records such as daily registers and children's records are readily available to underpin children's care. Confidentiality in the main is well supported; however, children's information is occasionally accessible to all, impacting on their welfare. Good policies and procedures are understood and implemented by staff in the main, to ensure that children are able to access a safe and secure environment, which supports that care, learning and well-being.

Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management for the funded nursery education is satisfactory. The manager has a clear understanding of her role and responsibilities, and a commitment to improve and adapt to change. She works closely with the management team to ensure that the provision offered to children is sound. However, monitoring of the curriculum is not effective which has led to gaps in the challenge that is offered to some children. Good support systems are in place to ensure that all staff working with children are suitable to do so and yearly appraisals ensure that staff's needs are identified and met as much as possible. Organisation of the environment is not always effectively monitored to ensure that all children are taking

part in the full range of activities. The strong staff team work well together and are committed to the improvement of the funded nursery education offered to children at the nursery.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was given four recommendations for improvement. These were to develop more effective systems to ensure accurate daily records of adults looking after children are retained for a minimum two-year period; ensure staff deployment and daily routines and activities are effectively organised to support children's play and learning, for example with regard to organisation of mealtimes, toileting routines and transition between activities; make more effective use of observations to plan the next steps for children's play, learning and development and to ensure that records are always available for inspection.

Registers of attendance are accurately recorded and retained for an appropriate period of time to ensure that it is clear what staff have cared for children, supporting their welfare. Observations are completed by all staff to show the progress that children are making in their learning and development, although these do not always clearly link to children's next steps. All records needed for inspection are accessible on site, supporting children's care and welfare. Although some progress has been made to ensure that staff deployment and daily routines support children's play and learning, this remains a recommendation as this is not consistent practice for some age groups.

This is the first Nursery Education inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received one complaint that required the setting to make improvements. A concern was raised about the supervision of children whilst in the garden and the use of physical intervention. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to the provision on 03/05/2007 to consider these concerns in relation to National Standards 1: Suitable person, 2: Organisation, 6: Safety, 7: Health, 11: Behaviour, 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers, and 13: Child protection. Ofsted also requested a copy of the provider's internal investigation. There was no evidence to suggest these National Standards were not being met, however, the following recommendation was made to further improve the childcare service: ensure that children can play safely outside through a combination of supervision and protection from hazards. Ofsted will be taking no further action at this time and the registered person continues to be 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 by Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that children's awareness of personal hygiene is promoted through access to hand washing facilities, particularly for children under two and ensure that all children's risk of cross-infection is limited, with particular regard to meal times
- ensure staff deployment with regard to daily routines and activities, are effectively organised to support children's play and learning, in particular meal times and some planned activities
- ensure that the accessibility of records relating to children's individual needs with regard to allergies and dietary requirements are stored confidentially and only accessible to persons that need to know.

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 that the organisation of activities actively promotes children's individual needs and ability to participate in the full range of activities on offer and that staff plan effectively for children's individual needs
- continue to develop the current observation and assessment process to ensure that this clearly links to what children have learnt and need to do next and ensure that focused activities are evaluated to show what children have learnt.

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