

Leapfrog Day Nursery - Bishop Stortford

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 125064

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Inspector Julie Ann Birkett

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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 good. 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, Bishops Stortford is one setting of a national nursery chain owned by the Busy Bees Group. The nursery opened in 1999 and operates from a purpose built building in the St. Michaels Mead area of Bishops Stortford. A maximum of 74 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:30 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 139 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, 31 receive funding for early education. Children come from both the local and wider catchment area.

The nursery employs 22 staff, of these 16, including the manager hold appropriate qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from cross-infection because staff follow good hygiene practices. For example, they wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies and clean tables and high chair trays with anti-bacterial cleaner. Children's bed linen is organised for individual use and washed regularly and individual face flannels are washed after each use to minimise the risk of cross-infection. There are staff who are appropriately trained to meet health requirements such as first aid and basic food hygiene.

The younger children learn about their own personal care through daily routines when they are encouraged to make their hands soapy and learn that this will 'wash all the germs away'. The older children take responsibility for their own hygiene needs when they use the soap dispensers and take tissues to blow their own noses. The staff act as good role models to the children and wash their own hands alongside the children and talk about needing clean hands before eating lunch. Pictorial signs in the older children's bathrooms encourage children to wash their hands correctly and independently.

Children are well nourished because they are provided with a good range of healthy foods at meal times. All children enjoy the food they are given and eat well. The younger children are encouraged to feed themselves by supportive staff. The older children have good opportunities to be independent when they access the healthy options at the juice bar. All children benefit from social meal times with staff sitting alongside them. This fosters children's communication skills as well as good table manners. Children learn about healthy foods through their play and topics and themes they work on. For example, the younger children look at books with staff and use play food in the role play area. The older enjoy cooking activities which promotes conversation about foods that are good for them. The children sow, tend and pick vegetables to eat from the vegetable garden, learning first-hand about the benefits of fresh, naturally grown foods.

Ongoing verbal and written communication between parents and carers and staff ensure that the younger children's developing dietary requirements are met very effectively. Menus are displayed to ensure parents and carers know what their children have been offered. Allergies are recorded and all staff made aware of these to ensure children's needs are met. All of the other required documentation to promote the children's good health is in place. For example, medical conditions are recorded and there are detailed accident forms which are shared with parents and carers so that any after care can be administered if required. Clear procedures are implemented well when children become unwell while at the nursery and a list of contagious diseases and a sick child exclusion policy ensures that all children are protected from cross-infection. All these measures demonstrate that the nursery work in partnership with parents and carers to promote the children's good health.

Children enjoy lots of fun activities which promote their physical strength and well-being. Inside, the babies enjoy crawling through tunnels and playing peek-a-boo games. They practise their crawling skills as they are encouraged to chase after rolling balls. The children learn to pull themselves up on sturdy furniture and their walking skills are fostered through a range of push along toys and adult support. The older children develop their strength and co-ordination well as they use sit and ride toys in the garden and climb the slide. They excitedly run after floating bubbles, showing good spatial awareness as they manage to avoid running into each

other. All children benefit from fresh air each day, which stimulates their minds and bodies, when they play in the nursery garden or go for walks in the local area such as going to feed the ducks.

Children are given healthy options throughout their daily routines which fosters a healthy lifestyle. There are some pictures, posters and books in the nursery to encourage conversation about good health and hygiene. However, staff are not very pro-active in helping children learn why these experiences are important in their lives to promote a positive attitude to exercise, eating and hygiene for their future good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in premises that are warm and welcoming. Playrooms are made attractive and individual thorough a range of displays of children's artwork and posters, although many displays are at adult height. A wider range of low-level and interactive displays has the potential to provide a more stimulating environment and points for discussion for the children.

All children benefit from being able to play freely and safely inside and out because staff carry out daily checks to ensure that the premises are safe to do so. An extensive risk assessment is carried out on the premises to ensure risks to children are minimised. For example, finger guards are in place on all doors to prevent small fingers becoming trapped. Security of the premises is robust to ensure children are not able to leave them unescorted and unauthorised person do not have access to the children. Additional precautions such as authorised only collection, a visitors book and identification checks on visitors also promotes the children's safety and security.

Space is used very well to meet the needs of the children. Additional rooms enable children to leave their base room to work in small groups on particular activities. Soft play equipment in the reception area enables children to experience large physical activities even in the worst of weathers. The garden is an excellent resource which effectively extends the children's learning environment. For example, both hard and grassed surface provide differences experiences for the children. Soil in a sand pit and plants growing in old tyres enable children to dig and plant. Plastic bottles and old saucepans fixed to the fence allow children, with the use of various spoons and sticks, to make sounds and music. Reflective CD discs and animal 'kites' in the trees help the children see the effects of the wind blowing in the garden. The nursery staff are working towards improving the outdoor area still further to make it an 'outdoor classroom'.

Children are provided with a wide range of appropriately maintained toys and equipment. Children have some access to a range of natural and recycled objects which further extends their play resources and opportunities and staff enhance resources by good home-made equipment such as a bug bag. There is suitable and sufficient child-sized furniture to enable children to play and eat together. Regular checks are carried out on equipment to ensure it is still safe and suitable for the children to use.

Children are encouraged to develop a good understanding of keeping themselves safe. For example, the youngest ones hear staff telling them that they are being strapped into their chairs to stop them falling out. The older children learn the rules to keep themselves safe when playing on the equipment in the garden. For example, they know they must not crowd each other at the top of the slide in case it causes someone to fall. They learn to use tools such as scissors and woodwork equipment in a controlled way so that they do not hurt themselves or

others. All children practise fire evacuation procedures regularly so that they can all get out of the building safely. The older children take part in topics such as, 'people who help us' which further develops their understanding of adults who can help them keep safe in their lives outside nursery.

Children are safeguarded because all staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and the protection of the children is their first priority. A number of staff have child protection training and all staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the procedures to follow with any concerns. Staff maintain regular informal communication with parents which develops strong partnerships between all those involved in keeping children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a busy time at the nursery. Lots of children's laughter can be heard which indicates they are happy in their play and learning. The children have opportunities to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities through age-appropriate activities and play experiences. The younger children benefit from the staff's training, knowledge and use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework in planning a varied range of activities and opportunities for both adult led activities and the children's free play over a period of time. Staff make regular observations of what the children can do to help them plan for their next steps in their development.

All children's confidence and self-esteem is promoted through the daily routines. They receive lots of praise and encouragement for the things they do which promotes a positive attitude to future learning. The babies' dependence on familiar adults is lessened as they are encouraged to join in group activities. As they become increasingly independent they have very good opportunities to access play equipment for themselves to develop their own ideas and games. The older children demonstrate independent thought and actions in their everyday play. For example, getting the resources needed to develop their own farm animal game.

The babies demonstrate their natural curiosity as learners when they point to things they see and take delight in the 'sound makers' they shake. The children investigate a shallow puddle of water found in the garden, splashing into it with their Wellingtons. They talk excitedly about the mini beasts they explore under magnifying glasses. Children take part in a number of planned activities to promote their sensory and explorative skills. For example, they play with sand, water and dough and enjoy messy play such as exploring jelly and gloop. Children have access to 'treasure baskets' full of interesting items. For example, they compare the textures of smooth metal pans and bumpy, rubbery buttons on mobile phones. However, these are generally saved for planned times and are not a regular part of the children's free play time. More frequent access to a wider range of clean and safe natural materials and recycled household objects has the potential to further enhance the children's investigative and sensory play.

Children have good opportunities to develop their language skills. Staff talk to the young children constantly and show that they understand the children's responses. The older children are confident speakers and ask lots of questions. Children discover the meaning of new words when staff introduce them to a wider vocabulary in everyday situations. All children enjoy singing rhymes and listening to stories which further promotes their language development.

Children's mathematical thinking is fostered. The babies and toddlers play with small world equipment and are beginning to sort and match items and classify them by their use. The older

children are beginning to name the shapes they see around them. They learn about number when they sing songs and use their fingers to represent how many they have.

Children use their imaginations in lots of everyday play. The very youngest children act out simple familiar home scenes as they make pretend cups of tea to share with the staff and cradle and care for their dolls. As they develop their imaginative play becomes more detailed. For example, they lay the home corner table for tea time with their friends. The children take part in a range of creative activities such as drawing, painting, collage and model building.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children's assessment records, including parents and carers written input, progress with them through the nursery. This enables staff to know what the children's starting points are and how best to meet their learning needs. Children's ongoing progress is monitored because staff make regular informative observations of what the children already know and can do. These written observations are evaluated and the individual children's next steps are identified under the six areas of learning. This information, as well as the staff's overall knowledge of the children, is used at curriculum meetings to help staff plan for the children's next steps.

Most staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage who support the less experienced staff well in their delivery of activities. The learning environment and programme of activities is adequately planned to provide a balanced range of experiences across the six areas of learning over a period of time to enable the children to make satisfactory progress. However, the current curriculum planning provides insufficient challenge for the more able children to ensure they continue to make ongoing progress. There is also limited forward planning of some particular activities which inhibits children's further learning. For example, the office role play area provides no additional resources such as pencils and paper for the children to practise their mark marking skills or written labels to help children make links between the written word and their meaning.

The children benefit from a variety of teaching methods such as whole and small group work and individual support where staff guide children's learning effectively through open-ended questioning and appropriate explanation and introduction of new ideas. The children are also able to consolidate their learning and make their own discoveries through their independent free play.

The children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered well and underpins all other aspects of their learning. The children are generally keen to take part in activities and are able to concentrate well on things that interest them. For example, they spend a long time hammering and sawing wood. The children are confident in their self-care, putting on art aprons and dressing up clothes.

Children are becoming confident speakers and readily make contributions to group discussions, talking about their own experiences. The children have opportunities to practise their emergent writing skills as they make marks at the drawing table or on clip boards outside. Some of the more able children confidently write their own names sounding out the letters as they write. Children's early phonic skills are generally reinforced by the letter of the week and through everyday experiences.

Children have appropriate opportunities to develop their early mathematical skills. They readily count during their play both up and down and use numbers confidently. The children recognise numbers that have significance to themselves such as their ages. They explore size and

measurement as they play in the sand and water and compare big and small boxes at the junk table. Children learn about positional language as they stand in line 'in front' and 'behind of' or 'next to'.

Children's early science skills are developed as they learn about life cycles of plants through practical first-hand experiences. Children show their understanding of the passage of time as they talk about the days of the week, month and the year. They learn about the changing seasons as they make observations of the weather and how the plants in the garden have changed. Simple technology equipment such as a cameras and torches help them begin to understand how tools work and aid them in their everyday lives. Children confidently use the computer to work on simple educational programmes and understand the associated vocabulary such as keys, mouse and click. The children work on projects about their environment, looking closely at their own local community. They design and build using construction toys and recycled materials. The children's fine motor skills are also promoted through threading activities and using simple tools such as scissors and rolling pins.

Children enjoy a wide range of creative activities. Some of the older children are already drawing and painting easily recognisable representations of what they see and experience. They explore a range of different materials and techniques in arts and crafts to express their imaginations. The children take part in a range of imaginative play such as dressing up, small world play, role play and using puppets. Children are provided with group activities to promote their creativity and imagination such as singing and dancing sessions .

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children settle quickly into nursery life because there are good procedures to support children and staff are warm and caring. This effectively helps children take the difficult step of separating from their families. The very youngest children develop a good sense of being special to someone through their daily routines and experiences. For example, parents and carers hand their babies over to a member of staff when they arrive. Staff chat enthusiastically to babies to encourage the children's sense of well-being. As they get older this is developed into a sense of being part of the group. For example, children know they have a space for their own things and the names of the room they belong to. All children are able to access a wide range of toys and resources for themselves because they are provided with well labelled boxes of equipment mostly stored at low-level. This also fosters the older children's sense of responsibility because they are encouraged to return things when they have finished using them.

Children play and learn in an environment where the registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children. Children develop an understanding of people's similarities and differences because they see positive images and play with toys and resources which reflect diversity. Children also learn about the wider world when they take part in celebrations of traditional and world festivals.

Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of children with learning difficulties or disabilities within the setting in partnership with the parents and carers and other relevant parties. There is a named member of staff who co-ordinates the sharing of information to enable all staff to meet the individual needs of the children and plan for their ongoing progress.

Children understand responsible behaviour and learn about boundaries and expectations. The very youngest children develop good trusting relationships with the staff as they sit playing

alongside each other. Their developing independence is encouraged as they grow and they are well supported as they try more challenging experiences. Staff help the youngest children cope with frustration through sensitive and age-appropriate distraction and diversion. As the children develop they are encouraged to think about how their behaviour affects themselves and others. The children's self-esteem is fostered through lots of praise and encouragement. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's welfare is promoted well because the management team and staff work effectively in partnership with parents and carers to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Parents and carers are provided with high quality information about the nursery including information on the 'Birth to three matters' and Foundation Stage frameworks so that parents and carers know how their children will make developmental progress in the nursery. There are good systems in place to ensure that information is shared between staff and parents and carers. For example, daily record sheets to share the under two-years-olds' routines with their parents and carers. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to contribute to the children's assessment records and the next steps for their child's progress. Parents and carers open evenings are held twice a year to share information on a more formal basis. Working in partnership with parents and carers is an integral part of the staff's role in the nursery and it's value is reflected by inclusion in the induction system for all new staff and staff appraisals. All these measures ensure that there is consistency between home and nursery life and promotes the children's development and well-being. Parents spoken to at this inspection were very complimentary of the nursery and staff.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded nursery education children is good. Children benefit from these good relationships because they see their parents and carers working with the staff. Parents and carers are well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum and how this promotes their child's learning in the nursery. They are provided with written information about the six areas of learning through an informative guide in the prospectus and through wall displays. Written plans are displayed in the nursery so that parents and carers are aware of what and how their child is learning. Regular newsletters are sent home regarding the coming topics and themed works which encourages parents and carers to link nursery learning to home events and situations.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are protected and their welfare promoted because there are good systems in place to ensure adults working with the children are suitable to do so. Recruitment and induction procedures are robust and ensure that all staff are aware of working practices in the nursery. There is an ongoing system for staff appraisal which includes their future professional development plans. All staff contribute to regular nursery self-evaluation forms which contribute to the nursery action plan for improvement. These measures foster staff and nursery development and ultimately promote positive outcomes for children.

Children benefit from the high proportion of qualified staff working in the nursery. All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to ongoing training to develop their skills and knowledge. They attend numerous courses and workshops throughout the year through external and internal training systems. This ensures that children are cared for and supported by staff who are knowledgeable and motivated by new ideas. The management team support their staff effectively through monitoring their practice and regular staff meetings. New ideas for further

improvement are discussed by all staff and each room develops their own action plan to work towards to ensure ongoing development.

There is an extensive operational plan which clearly outlines the aims of the nursery and how these will be achieved to promote the children's safety, care and learning. The well written policies and procedures underpin the good working practices in the nursery. All the required documentation is well-maintained to ensure the efficient day-to-day management of the provision.

Leadership and management of the funded nursery education is satisfactory. The management team are positive in their approach and work hard to lead all staff in achieving positive results with the children. Overall, the management team have recognised the same areas for improvement as outlined in this report and are working on steps to address these. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the two to three-year-old children have been provided with a wider range of toys and activities to develop their experiences and learning with even more new equipment being delivered during this inspection.

Hygiene in the setting has improved by instigating a number of practices in the nursery to ensure children are protected from the risk of cross-infection. Playroom carpets are now more regularly cleaned by contractors enabling children to play on the floor freely without risk of infection from dirty carpets. There are currently no animals in the setting but staff demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the balance between enabling children to enjoy animals through first-hand experiences and maintaining hygiene standards. Also babies now have their hands washed thoroughly before and after eating and nappy changing mats are kept clean to protect children from cross-infection.

The child protection procedure, now known as the safeguarding children procedure, has been updated in line with changes in the childcare field and is in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board recommendations. This policy is readily available in the setting and the nursery prospectus refers to the setting's duty to report any concerns to the appropriate authority regarding safeguarding children.

At the last inspection of nursery education the nursery were asked to develop the planning system to enable staff to plan the next steps in the children's individual learning programme. Staff make regular observations of what the children already know and can do and use this information to identify the children's next steps in their learning to help them plan a range of activities to enhance the children's further learning. The staff have developed new systems for curriculum planning but there is still further room for improvement as previously outlined in this report.

They were also asked to review the staff's training needs to ensure they receive appropriate training for the Foundation Stage of learning. Since the last inspection there has been a change in staff in the funded nursery classrooms. Most staff working with the funded children now have a level three qualification and therefore a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. The staff have attended numerous in-house training meetings on the Foundation Stage and overall staff are competent in the delivery of this educational framework. New, unqualified staff are mentored and supported well in the pre-school room to ensure they support the children's educational needs.

The setting were also asked to provide more challenge for the older and more able children to enable them to develop their calculation skills. The more able are now provided with more opportunities to learn how to solve simple number problems. For example, they sing number rhymes frequently learning how to add and take away and are encouraged to work out how many more cups are needed for the number of children at the table. Children use a peg system to record who is playing outside and can tell by the number of pegs left how many more can go out.

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 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 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):

- provide further opportunities for children to learn about personal care and healthy living
- make the environment even more stimulating and welcoming for children
- improve children's natural curiosity as learners through more frequent access to a wider range of clean and safe natural materials and recycled household objects

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):

- develop curriculum planning to ensure a broad range of activities and experiences are provided to challenge and motivate children, particularly the more able, and review presentation of activities to ensure children are motivated to use them and learn as much as possible from them.

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