

Leapfrog Day Nursery - Crawley

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY224890
Inspection date	04 February 2008
Inspector	Gill Moore
Setting Address	Trade Park Developments, Denvale Trade Park, Haslett Avenue East, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 1SS
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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 is part of a chain that has recently been taken over by the Busy Bees Group. It opened in 2001 and operates from a purpose built building situated in the centre of Crawley. The building is organised into specific areas for the various age groups who attend. Children have access to an enclosed outside play area.

The nursery is registered to provide care for 132 children aged under eight years. There are currently 115 children from three months to five years on roll; of these 45 children are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 07:00 - 19:00 all year round. Children can attend a variety of sessions or full day care.

The company employs a qualified manager to be responsible for the day to day running of the nursery. In addition, there are 24 staff who work directly with the children, 13 of whom are qualified. One member of staff is working towards a recognised early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because good standards of hygiene are maintained throughout the nursery. Practitioners use sanitizer spray to clean nappy changing stations and change cot bedding after use, which helps to minimise the spread of germs. Milk kitchens in individual rooms and the main kitchen where meals are prepared are extremely clean and hygienic. Practitioners wear disposable gloves and aprons, although procedures to ensure gloves are worn when changing all children's nappies are not fully implemented. Children's health is maintained because secure procedures are in place to respond to accidents and record and share this information effectively with parents. Written consent for children to receive medical treatment and advice is requested from parents, as part of the registration process, helping to promote children's health in an emergency situation. Children learn to follow very good personal hygiene routines talking confidently about why it is important to use soap when 'washing the germs away' and recognise how germs spread and affect their bodies.

Children's understanding of the importance of eating a healthy balanced diet is extremely well promoted through discussions with practitioners and the healthy range of meals and snacks provided. A qualified cook prepares all food for children, which is implemented on a six weekly menu and changed seasonally. Children benefit from home cooked nutritious meals, such as chicken and mushroom risotto with peas and pasta and bean casserole served with crusty bread. Desserts, such as fruit and jelly and bananas and custard are provided and a lighter tea, including cheesy beans and toast or cheese and salad vegetables on crackers is followed by fruits and yoghurts. Secure procedures are in place to ensure every child's individual dietary requirements are fully catered for and vegetarian options are also available as part of the daily menu. Children's independence is exceptionally well promoted at snack and meal times as they pour their own drinks and fetch their own plates and cutlery. They talk to practitioners about the healthy options available at snack times, such as chopped up fruit and vegetables, and recognise the different types of foods that are good for their bodies and help them to grow. Babies and younger children develop very good independence holding spoons and learning to feed themselves supported by practitioners and all mealtimes are used to promote children's social skills and table manners. Older children help themselves to drinking water recognising when they become thirsty and bottles and cups of fresh water are offered to babies and younger children across the day.

All children benefit from daily opportunities to develop their physical skills in the indoor garden. The nursery has a good range of equipment, particularly smaller resources, such as hoops, coits, bats and balls, and children ride bicycles and cars confidently and throw and catch balls to their peers. They begin to develop good coordination and spatial awareness and younger children increase their confidence negotiating steps to the slide and learning to walk unaided. However, the planning for physical play is not well developed and clear purposes of activities are not identified. Older children receive little challenge and do not benefit from learning to take risks as equipment available, such as climbing and balancing apparatus, are mainly geared towards their younger peers. Children enjoy playing with the soft play equipment, although insufficient use is made of this area, and benefit from participating in group activities, such as playing with the parachute. Parents are offered opportunities to pay additional fees for their child to participate in dance and 'Fit and Fun' sessions led by qualified specialist teachers, although not all children receive these opportunities. Insufficient use is made of the outside area to promote children's physical development. Children have few opportunities to wrap up warm

and run around and play outside, which impacts on their understanding about the importance of regular fresh air and enjoying regular exercise in all weather conditions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is well promoted throughout the nursery because practitioners are vigilant and ensure effective security procedures are implemented consistently. Practitioners and parents use key fobs, which enables them access into the different areas within the nursery, and prevents unauthorised people from gaining entry. Closed circuit television is used to monitor the security of the nursery, and visitors are required to sign in and out and show identification, clearly stating the purpose of their visit on arrival. Highly effective systems are in place to formally and informally implement risk assessments and the designated health and safety officer takes the lead role in overseeing security and ensuring stringent safety procedures are implemented. Children practise regular fire drills, which are recorded and evaluated, increasing their understanding of the procedure to follow in the event of an emergency. Practitioners make very good use of discussions and incidental opportunities to promote children's understanding of safety issues. For example, children learn how to use tools, such as scissors and knives safely through their play and talk about why it is important not to run around inside, recognising the potential dangers this may cause.

Children begin to gain a very good understanding of how to keep safe when playing outside or shopping with mummy. They talk about who they should approach if they become lost discussing the role of the policeman in their community. Children discuss the different types of road crossings identifying safe places to cross and discuss how to keep safe around fire as they talk about the role of the fireman, linked to the current pre-school theme. They benefit enormously because they are cared for in a safe and secure purpose built environment, where their independence is promoted. Children access toilets independently and secure procedures are in place to restrict access to areas, such as the kitchen and laundry, helping to keep children safe. The nursery is bright and attractive throughout, with children's work, photographs and notice boards displayed, promoting an inviting and stimulating environment for children and parents. Space is generally well organised throughout and children benefit from designated base rooms. The nursery has a good range of furniture, equipment and play resources, which are clean and well maintained and effective procedures, are in place to ensure these are sterilised and checked regularly, which contributes to keeping children safe.

Children are well protected and safeguarded from harm because practitioners have a clear understanding of their role with regards to protecting children in their care. They implement suitable procedures to record and discuss injuries children arrive with, and respond appropriately when concerns are raised around child protection issues. Secure systems are in place to ensure children are collected from adults known to practitioners and the use of a password system, and the need to produce identification, helps to safeguard children in the event of an emergency. Suitable procedures are in place to ensure children are never left unsupervised with anyone who has not been vetted, and visitors and visiting parents are monitored and accompanied around the nursery, which helps to protect children attending.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy coming to nursery and develop secure trusting relationships. Practitioners interact well with children and are affectionate towards them helping them to settle when they first arrive in the morning. Babies and younger children benefit from designated base rooms where they are cared for by familiar practitioners, ensuring consistency, which helps promote their sense of security and self assurance. However, the organisation of space for children under two years is ineffective, because they are frequently disturbed by practitioners and other children wandering through their base areas. Babies smile and babble responding excitedly when practitioners play 'peek a boo.' They explore sound shaking rattles and musical instruments, including rain makers and the xylophone, and giggle as they bounce up and down delighted when they make the different noises. A good selection of resources are available, although the organisation of these and accessibility are not fully developed. Play provision is placed on high shelves and practitioners fail to make a wide selection of resources available frequently throughout sessions. Consequently, some babies begin to get restless because they are not fully occupied and stimulated across the day.

Toddlers develop very good independence as they attempt to put on their aprons and coats and seek the support from practitioners when required. They become competent learners working out how to use the sieve when playing in the sand. Children respond to effective questioning from practitioners as they decide to try and pick the sand up using spades recognising that the holes in the sieve make the sand fall out. They learn new skills because practitioners introduce ideas and resources, such as using the spade to make the wheel turn. Children concentrate well and practise pouring the sand into different containers clapping with excitement as they watch the wheel spin round. They recognise colours and become skilful communicators learning new language introduced by practitioners. Children express imagination playing with the kitchen and develop their physical skills using the soft play equipment. They explore a range of media, including dough, dried and cooked pasta and water, and benefit from use of a wonderful sensory room, although insufficient opportunities are available for them to be creative and explore their senses across the day.

Practitioners play alongside children and support their early development. They use the Birth to three matters framework to plan activities and experiences for children under three years. However, some practitioner's understanding of this is limited, which impacts on the opportunities and stimulation they provide. Children's individual progress is observed and recorded, although this information is not used to help guide the planning. Consequently, although practitioners know what children can do, they fail to use their knowledge to move them on to the next stage in their learning and activities and experiences provided are not always tailored to children's individual developmental needs.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Practitioners have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan a well balanced range of activities and experiences linked to the stepping stones. Topics are used to help plan these and special events and cultural events are also incorporated. Children's learning is really enhanced through group discussions and planned activities because practitioners make very good use of these situations to promote discussion and encourage children to think through their own ideas. For example, children use flashcards and discuss the various roles people play in their local community. They confidently contribute to group discussions eager to play an active role, and recognise the need to value

what their peers have to say. Focused activities have clear learning intentions and practitioners identify how these are to be adapted in order to support and challenge children effectively. Good use is made of incidental opportunities to promote learning, for example whilst waiting to go out and play in the garden children count, recognise and compare colours and clothes they are wearing and sing songs.

However, some practitioners fail to use their knowledge of the stepping stones to make the most of learning opportunities through children's independent play. The routine of the session provides opportunities for children to work in large and small groups and has a dedicated time for them to choose their own activities making decisions about where they want to play. However, insufficient time is given for children to engage in independent play as most of the routine tends to be very structured. Consequently, children spend much of their time sitting in groups participating in adult led discussions and activities or waiting around for their peers. For example, children all line up to go to the bathroom together before snacks and meals and are sometimes sat at tables for over ten minutes waiting for their meals to arrive. Whilst practitioners acknowledge this and attempt to make the most of learning opportunities, some children become fidgety and consequently are not fully involved in the session.

Children recognise sounds and letters and enjoy exploring books independently and with their peers. Practitioners make excellent use of registration times and group stories to promote children's understanding of sounds, letters and phonics and develop their understanding of number. For example, children find the numerals to represent the date, count the number of ducklings in the story and work out how many there are in total as more and more arrive. They have independent access to practise emergent writing through their self chosen play accessing tools and materials from the writing trolley. Children's handwriting is exceptionally well developed. However, too much emphasis is placed on extending this through formal learning, and insufficient attention is paid to supporting them through their independent play. For example, children engage in a half an hour group activity around phonics and focused activities writing about people who help them, whilst some receive little interaction through their self chosen activities.

Children have planned opportunities to investigate how things change, for example planting bulbs, cooking and exploring what happens to ice once it begins to melt. They examine trees and leaves across different seasons, explore weather conditions and make a rain catcher to conduct experiments and measure how much rain has fallen overnight. Children are supported in using the nursery computer at specific times and use a range of educational programmes to enhance their learning. However, they have insufficient opportunities to access information and communication technology and to develop their curiosity and investigative skills freely during their independent play, because resources are not made available to them. Some aspects of the learning environment are well developed, such as opportunities for children to select writing equipment, explore books in a soft and comfortable environment and develop their understanding of mathematical concepts. They have independent access to a range of mathematical resources on a trolley enabling them to sort, match and compare and use scales developing their understanding of weight and measure. Children use a range of construction equipment confidently building different models and towers and are keen to show practitioner's their achievements during their free play. However, practitioners fail to use these opportunities to promote children's understanding of size, shape and measure, for example, and simply respond by praising children for their efforts.

Opportunities for children to engage in role-play are available through their independent play and this area is changed regularly, which enables children to express their imagination in a

variety of different settings, including a home corner, a shop and a café. However, the poor presentation of this area, and lack of resources available, hinders children's ability to fully express their imagination and develop their own ideas through play. Children enjoy dressing up with their peers and decide to go shopping fetching baskets and shopping trolleys. They discuss what to buy and suggest they cook dinner after their trip. However, boxes and packets available in the shop are limited and damaged because they have been trodden on and squashed and inside the cupboard there is one saucepan and one cup, which impacts on their ability to cook dinner for their peers. As a result, some children become bored and pretend to be ghosts hiding under blankets, although this eventually impacts on their behaviour and they become disruptive and start to run around.

The organisation of space enables children to explore creativity as a designated art and craft area is made available. Children have planned opportunities to explore their senses using the sensory inside garden and explore a range of media, including paint, rice and water. However, children fail to make use of this area through their independent play because resources are not freely available to them, which impacts on their ability to freely explore creativity and express their imagination. For example, the sand tray is kept covered. The painting easel is available, however paints, brushes and paper cannot be accessed independently as they are placed on high shelves and these resources are not available to them unless they ask. Children participate in physical activities daily, although insufficient use is made of the outside learning environment. Generally speaking, children play in the indoor garden, although practitioners make more use of outside during warmer weather. However, the outside area is bland and very few resources are available, which impacts on children's ability to extend their learning across all areas outside.

Overall, practitioners interact well with children and use good questioning techniques in most situations, particularly during planned activities and discussions. Children benefit because practitioners know them well and talk to them about their families and things that are happening at home. Systems to observe and monitor children's individual achievements and progress are in place and evidence is obtained through written observations, photographs and the use of samples of children's work. This is compiled into a portfolio, which is shared with parents. However, procedures to link this evidence to the stepping stones identifying clearly how children are progressing towards the early learning goals are not yet fully developed. Children's starting points are not assessed and there are no links in place between planning and assessment. Consequently, information gained from assessment is not used effectively to plan the next steps in children's individual learning ensuring that every child is able to achieve their individual potential during their time at nursery.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children display high levels of confidence and self assurance throughout the nursery. They respond well to praise and encouragement from practitioners and begin to recognise each other's strengths and achievements. Overall, children's behaviour is very good. They are kind towards their peers and recognise the need to share and take turns when talking in group situations. However, the organisation of time and presentation of the learning environment, sometimes impacts on children's behaviour and they become fidgety as they begin to lose interest. Although behaviour is effectively managed by practitioners, little attention is paid to introducing boundaries in the first instance in order that children are fully aware of what is expected of them. For example, children are encouraged to help pack away at the end of free play, although little emphasis is placed on encouraging them to look after the play provision.

They trample all over boxes ruining equipment for the role-play area and fail to place resources in the correct places and this is not challenged or discussed.

Practitioners have an understanding of equal opportunities and ensure all children have equal access to the range of resources available. The nursery promotes a fully inclusive environment where every child's and families' needs, cultures and beliefs are respected and implement suitable procedures to support children with learning disabilities and difficulties. Children throughout the nursery begin to learn about their own and other cultures and beliefs. For example, the nursery celebrates Chinese New Year and the Japanese Doll and Dragon Boat Festivals. They listen to international music, wear costumes and enjoy food tasting activities increasing their understanding of clothes people wear and food they eat. Topics, such as Ourselves, Holidays and Transport, provide opportunities for children to discuss and compare their own family units, how they live, places they have visited and different ways to travel. Children celebrate Australia Day and look on the map as they explore how far away this country is in relation to where they live. They make Rangoli patterns as part of Hanukah celebrations exploring different painting techniques and eat pancakes on Pancake Day. Resources promoting a diversity of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability are also available, increasing children's awareness of diversity, although these are not freely available throughout the session. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit because friendly informal relationships are established between practitioners and their parents. Secure registration and settling in procedures ensure children settle well and are self assured within the nursery. Parents are well informed about the nursery through a variety of ways. Detailed information about the aims and objectives of the group, routines and policies is included in the information pack for parents. Monthly newsletters and information displayed on parent notice boards also helps to keep them informed about what is happening. Practitioners talk to parents about their child's day informally and implement daily diaries for babies and younger children, ensuring parents are well informed about routine activities, such as feeding and sleeping, as well as experiences children have enjoyed. Regular opportunities are available for parents to meet with children's key workers and discuss their child's progress and parents are invited into the nursery at any time to play alongside their child or share their skills.

The partnerships with parents of children who receive nursery education are satisfactory. Parents are well informed about the planning of activities as this is displayed on the notice board. They receive regular newsletters and topic letters advising them about the topic and the activities children will be involved in. Parents are invited to contribute their own ideas and suggestions, encouraging them to play an active role in their child's learning. However, information about the Foundation Stage of learning and how children learn through play is not provided or made available to parents. Consequently, this impacts on some parents' expectations of what children should be achieving at this age. Practitioners share information about children's individual progress and achievements regularly, informally, and formally through the implementation of two written reports a year. This highlights children's progress in each area of learning and opportunities are provided for parents to discuss this and share their child's assessment records with key workers. However, opportunities for parents to be informed about their child's next steps in their individual learning, and how to extend this in the home, have not yet been introduced, which impacts on their ability to fully contribute to their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit because they are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced practitioners who work extremely well as a team. Effective communication takes place across the nursery, through informal discussions and formal meetings, and consequently sessions run smoothly on a day to day basis. The nursery is well organised and has a secure management structure. Clear roles and responsibilities are defined and practitioners take the lead role in specific areas. The implementation of a key worker system helps to enhance relationships across the nursery and develop children's sense of belonging and security within the group. As a result, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Robust and rigorous procedures are in place to recruit, appoint and induct new practitioners. Informal procedures are in place to monitor staff on a regular basis and formal appraisals are implemented twice a year. This provides opportunities for individual strengths to be recognised and training needs identified. Set objectives are discussed and reviewed, which helps to monitor progress individual staff make. Management place a strong emphasis on self evaluation and use a formal assessment tool regularly across the year to evaluate how successfully the nursery promotes outcomes for children. The required documentation is in place and most of this is accurately maintained. However, there are occasional weaknesses in the recording of children's attendance and room registers do not always reflect the actual practitioners working with the children at any one time. Some written policies and procedures are out of date; however these are currently being reviewed by the new company to ensure they reflect actual practice within the nursery.

Leadership and management of nursery education are satisfactory. Secure procedures are in place to plan the educational programme and monitor this ensuring all aspects are included. However, too little emphasis is placed on promoting children's development in some areas through their independent play and insufficient attention is paid to promoting physical development, both inside and outdoors. Although teaching is observed and monitored, systems to evaluate the impact this has on children's progress across all elements of the session are not fully developed. For example, whilst practitioners make very good use of planned activities and group times to promote learning, they fail to use children's independent play to introduce new skills and consolidate those they have already achieved. Systems to monitor children's individual achievements, ensuring they receive sufficient challenge have not been fully implemented. Overall, children are happy and have a lovely time during the time they spend at nursery, although opportunities for their individual potential to be recognised and nurtured are not always fully promoted.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group were asked to ensure that explanations are given to children as to why their behaviour is inappropriate. They were also asked to ensure that the Local Area Child Protection Committee letter is available to parents and ensure the availability of child restraints when using high or low chairs.

Children are now helped to understand why some behaviour is unacceptable through discussion with practitioners and their peers. This helps to foster positive relationships throughout the nursery and increase children's understanding of right and wrong. Parents receive written information about the role of the nursery with regards to child protection issues and letters from the Local Area Child Protection Committee were issued following the last inspection. This

information remains displayed in the foyer of the nursery. All equipment, such as high and low chairs, are fitted with child restraints, which helps to promote their safety.

At the last nursery education inspection the group were asked to improve the planning of physical activities, in relation to ball games, and opportunities for calculating and emergent writing. They were also asked to develop opportunities for children to use a variety of information and communication technology resources.

Physical activities are now incorporated into the curriculum planning, although clear learning intentions are not identified and this still remains an area for development. Opportunities for children to calculate and practise emergent writing, through their independent play and through planned activities and group times have increased since the last inspection. Consequently, children's writing skills are extremely well developed and their understanding of number is well promoted. Children have access to a computer and some other information and communication technology equipment, although this is restricted, and still remains an area for development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 Ofsted received one complaint that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. This complaint related to Standards 6: Safety and Standard 7: Health. The concerns were regarding poor hygiene practices and the accessibility of a fire evacuation cot. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to investigate the concerns. Following this visit, one action was set under National Standard 7: Health and two actions were set under National Standard 6: Safety. Ofsted received a written response from the provider detailing the steps they had taken to address the issues, which Ofsted found to be satisfactory. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are 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):

- improve hygiene procedures with regards to nappy changing
- review the organisation of space for children under two years and improve the range and accessibility of resources to ensure babies and young children are stimulated and occupied

- ensure staff use the information gained from children's observations to plan activities and experiences tailored to their individual needs
- improve the daily registration systems for children and staff to ensure an accurate record of attendance is maintained and registers show the actual staff working in each room

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):

- improve the use of time, presentation of the learning environment, both inside and out, and practitioner's understanding of how to promote learning through children's independent play
- review the systems to monitor and record children's progress and ensure this is used effectively to meet the children's individual learning needs
- provide information for parents about the Foundation Stage and how children learn through play and increase their opportunities to be informed about their child's next steps in their individual learning
- further develop procedures to review and monitor teaching practice, delivery of the curriculum and the impact this has on children's individual progress

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