



Leapfrog Day Nursery - Welwyn Garden City

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY308307
Inspection date	08 December 2005
Inspector	Paula Durrant / Kerry Freshwater
Setting Address	Kestral Way, Shire Park, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL7 1TN
Telephone number	01707 393380
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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 is one of 101 nurseries owned by Nord Anglia Plc. It originally opened in 1994 as part of the Jigsaw Day Nursery Group and was taken over in June 2004 by its current company. The nursery is a purpose built facility operating from six base rooms on the outskirts of Welwyn Garden City town centre. A maximum of 74 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure

enclosed play area.

There are currently 90 children aged from three months to five years on roll. Of these 21 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of the parents travel in to work on or around the industrial estate or commute to more distant locations. The nursery has systems in place to support children with special needs and those with English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 27 staff of whom 25 work directly with the children. Of these 16, including the nursery manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The remainder of the staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy good health and a healthy lifestyle because practitioners effectively adhere to clear, well structured health and safety procedures, which are consistently applied. For example, all staff wear protective clothing and gloves when changing nappies and changing areas are cleansed intermittently with antibacterial solution in-between each nappy change. This supports prevention of cross contamination. Children are beginning to learn the importance of good personal hygiene as they follow the daily routine. They know when to wash their hands such as, prior to eating, after using the toilet facilities and when returning from outside play. Older children however do not fully understand the purpose of this task as staff give limited emphasis to introducing discussion about germs. Children over the age of two-years are highly self sufficient in meeting their self care needs. They access tissues from the tissue dispenser on the wall wipe their own noses and throw the used item in the bin without any prompt or direction from staff.

Children's health is high priority in this setting. A majority of staff hold a current paediatric first aid qualification and there are sufficient medical supplies and stringent procedures to follow in the event of a medical emergency. Staff hold comprehensive knowledge of children's individual medical conditions. A health bulletin which displays a photograph of the child with a specified condition ensures correct identity and addresses clear and concise action to be taken should the child display any of the recorded symptoms. This is also followed through for children with individual dietary needs. Multi-layered checks are undertaken prior to a child with a specific food intolerances or allergies being served their meals. For example, meals are plated on red plates for easy identification and room staff sign in acceptance from the cook that the requirements are correct and in compliance with parental guidance. In addition all food trolleys are individually labelled for each room base with a reference document for all supplementary likes, dislikes and preferences that children may have.

Children receive a highly nutritious balanced diet. All meals are prepared on site from raw ingredients by the cook and her assistant. The rotation of a summer and winter

menu ensures variety and selection of seasonal produce. Children enjoy the foods they are offered and empty their plates quickly. Children remain well hydrated as they have constant access to drinking water throughout the day. Babies receive milk feeds in line with routine in addition to cooled boiled water to quench their thirst at other times. Toddlers have lidded cups which are replenished periodically and older children independently access a fresh drinking water tap and cups in their base room.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' guidance well to provide a good range of physical play experiences for babies and young children. An indoor sensory playroom provides opportunities for babies to experiment and explore their environment enabling tantalising challenges to motivate movement such as crawling and walking. Children share daily access to the garden regardless of the weather conditions. Additional outer clothing such as shoes and coats are available for children should they be needed. This means children have daily access to fresh air and frequent opportunities to exert their energy and make full use of the array of physically challenging resources in the garden. Children are able to rest and be active according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

This well designed and effectively monitored nursery gives high priority to children's safety and welfare. Practitioners help keep children safe in the nursery and on outings because they fully understand and comply with safety requirements. All necessary safety measures are in place. Rigorous risk assessments are undertaken frequently. Access to the premises is vigilantly monitored by an effective security system and through the supervision and management of the entrance area.

Children access an extensive range of safe, high quality, well-maintained developmentally appropriate resources which are effectively organised in child height furniture to encourage independent access. Staff skilfully explain safe practices, such as the need to pick up items dropped on the floor, so that other children do not fall or hurt themselves, to play in specified areas not blocking fire exits and to use equipment appropriately such as not walking around the room with scissors and not wrapping bandages from the role play hospital around their necks. This helps children to learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

Staff protect children well. Strong recruitment and induction procedures ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. This includes experience, training and vetting checks. Children remain the primary focus of care in this well organised and managed setting. Staff are vigilant in their practice and are confident in their knowledge of child protection, reporting concerns appropriately to senior staff. Open relationships between home and nursery ensure that children's needs remain the single important factor. The child protection co-ordinator ensures that procedures are up-to-date and that staff understand their responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and make good progress in learning, leisure and personal development because practitioners are confident, enthusiastic and knowledgeable in their childcare practice. Staff effectively use the 'Birth to three matters' guidance to provide a varied range of practical play experiences to progress children's learning and all round development. For example, babies receive an array of tactile sensorial experiences exploring through touch, taste and sound. Toddlers are effectively supported in their play developing an awareness of number as they count blocks when building towers and increasing their vocabulary as they name familiar objects when sharing books with an adult. Positive relationships with staff and sound planning systems support the progression and development of younger children's natural curiosity as learners. Staff monitor children's achievements purposefully and use the information gained to set future targets.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most children are making steady progress through the Foundation Stage. Staff use their knowledge and experience to provide a suitable variety of play experiences. These keep children happily occupied, but do not always challenge the older, more able child. Much of the play equipment set out for children does not have any clear, identified learning intention. This leads to a heavy reliance upon staff's individual abilities to extend learning through play and variable quality of interaction. Staff have limited training in the Foundation Stage, covered initially through their childcare courses. Although planning mechanisms are in place restricted emphasis towards medium term aims and limited monitoring of the education curriculum means that systems do not currently effectively guide staff in progressing children through stages or ensuring all aspects of the Foundation Stage are covered equally. Assessment records are maintained with sufficient frequency. Parents have the opportunity to access these records and to contribute to their child's developmental profiles.

Children are happy and settled and show a strong sense of belonging, and are developing friendship groups. They are confident in both small and large group situations and generally show a caring attitude towards others. They are beginning to learn how to take turns and to play together co-operatively. Children are generally involved in their play, although this does tend to focus on areas with adult supervision. They are beginning to assume some responsibility for their personal care, although staff do not explain the reasons for this such as when washing their hands or gaining a tissue for their nose.

Children speak with growing confidence and share their experiences with others. They listen well to stories, join in responsively, and have books readily available at all times. Children are beginning to assign meaning to marks and to developing their skills with sounds and letters. They are beginning to count, recognise different shapes compare number and solve simple mathematical problems. Children develop a sense of time and place through group and individual discussions and through the daily routine. Children have many opportunities to observe natural objects both inside and outside, and they enjoy exploring the world around them. Children use the computer and technological toys. They are developing their knowledge of other

cultures and beliefs.

Children develop their physical skills through a wide variety of activities both inside and outside the building. These include activities to develop hand eye co-ordination and large physical movements. However, there is insufficient emphasis on developing children's understanding of health and bodily awareness. Children follow routines such as washing their hands but are not clear about the reasons for doing this. They experience a wide variety of media as they paint, stick and mould malleable materials. Children's imagination develops through a variety of role-play activities, including a home corner, shop, office and hospital. They have regular opportunities to sing songs and play musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and children with special needs are warmly welcomed in the nursery. Practitioners ensure that the resources positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. Weekly extra curricular activities such as 'French' and 'Kindaroo' support children in developing an awareness of the wider world as they name objects, count and identify colours in a different language and gain a sense of place as they talk about where they live extending to look at flags of different countries around the world. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others. Most children are well behaved, and very polite in response to the consistent expectations of caring practitioners. The manager ensures that a warm welcoming and homely environment is provided, prioritising the welfare of the children in attendance. Children take turns and show concern for others. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Practitioners are conscientious and welcoming to parental input. There is a wealth of information which is easily accessible which includes general care and educational literature. Parents value the openness and honesty of staff. This supports the appropriate sharing of information in sensitive situations. Parents are highly complimentary about the level of service provided.

Staff encourage parents to actively contribute towards individual assessment records. Therefore, children benefit from a two way sharing of information between parents and practitioners to enhance their learning. This underpins their progress in the nursery and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The nursery effectively communicates and fully shares literature and information about the educational provision and therefore the partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Staff use

the curriculum guidance and their training in childcare to provide a suitable variety of play experiences to progress children's learning. Although formal training in the Foundation Stage is yet to be undertaken staff share the responsibility of contributing to planning systems, supporting each other as they develop their own systems. Monitoring and review of the educational content is only just beginning to take place. This means that some minor gaps have yet to be addressed. For example, staff fail to identify the role of the adult, equipment used or evaluate the learning outcome for children. This means that effective use of time, space and resources does not always provide sufficient challenge for the older more able child. Children have limited involvement in their learning as staff do not always make full use of incidental learning drawn from the daily routine. Poor organisation and preparation in readiness for change over periods means that children on occasion sit for too long in large groups. Minor behavioural disputes erupt. This is mainly due to staff's confidence in the Foundation Stage and the forming of a new team structure. Robust recruitment and induction processes underpin the suitability and professional development of staff. There is a real commitment to training and minimum qualification requirements are met. All employees complete appropriate vetting prior to commencement of work to ensure the welfare and safety of children. Sound written organisational procedures effectively underpin staff's working practice. Overall, the needs of all children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received one complaint relating to Standard 2: Organisation, 3 Care, Learning and Play and 8 Food and Drink. The complaint related to deployment of staff and the meeting of children's individual needs during the breakfast routine and the sufficiency of the tea menu. Ofsted Childcare Inspectors made an unannounced visit to the nursery on 25 July 2005. Ofsted took no further action and 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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

- ensure children fully understand the purpose of the hand washing routine, this refers to raising awareness about germs

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):

- continue to develop planning systems making full use of medium term plans in order to provide a cohesive curriculum that plots and progresses children's learning in stages
- ensure evaluation and monitoring of the educational programme is undertaken periodically to affirm equal balance across all areas of learning
- ensure staff make effective use of time, space and resources to provide sufficient challenge to maintain older children's interest, this refers to a balance of adult led and child initiated activities, use of incidental learning opportunities through the daily routine and the timing of large group sessions.

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