



## Leapfrog Day Nursery - Thurrock

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	204367
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 January 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Patricia Mary Champion / Anne Daly
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 of settings under the ownership of Nord Anglia. It opened in 2000 and operates from a purpose built two-storey premises with a baby lodge. It is situated on the edge of Chafford Hundred. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area. A maximum of 114 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens 5 days a week all year round, except for public holidays. Operating times are from 07:00 until 19:00.

There are currently 167 children from 0 to 5 years on roll. Of these, 53 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions or full day care. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have special needs or who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 31 staff, of whom 15 of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are 6 staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff follow sound procedures which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Staff wear disposable gloves and aprons when preparing food or changing nappies and tables are cleaned with anti-bacterial cleanser to help prevent any cross infection. Children are starting to learn the importance of good hygiene through the daily routine, which includes washing their hands after using the toilet or before meals. However, there is some inconsistency between rooms regarding good hygiene practices. Some children are not encouraged to wash their hands prior to snack times and tissues are not always disposed of hygienically. Clear policies support the children's health and well-being, with suitable action taken if a child is unwell. Children are protected as the majority of staff hold current first aid certificates. Appropriate records are kept of any accidents or when medication is given. However, not all the staff fully understand the medication policy within the rooms used by the youngest children.

Children are well-nourished. Freshly cooked, nutritious meals are cooked on the premises. Children are encouraged to make healthy choices at snack and mealtimes and enjoy eating fresh fruit and vegetables. Drinking water is available at all times throughout the day to ensure that children do not become dehydrated. However, the displayed menus do not accurately reflect the food provided for the children each day. Mealtimes are calm, happy social occasions. Babies are seated where they can see each other and the older children gain independence through making choices about their food and serving their own meals. All staff are well aware of any allergies or special dietary requirements because staff work well with parents and gather comprehensive information to meet individual children's needs.

Children have daily opportunities for physical exercise, which contributes to their good health. Each age group has a scheduled time to use the garden and children show enthusiasm when invited outdoors to play. They run and move confidently during outdoor games and activities. A range of outdoor apparatus is provided so that children can practise and refine their skills when climbing and balancing. During wet weather staff clear indoor space so that children can move energetically. They enjoy exercising or dancing to music and take part in active games such as musical bumps. The younger children in the nursery have space to develop their physical skills when

crawling or learning to walk. Very good use is made of the sensory room to enhance the physical development of all ages of children. Children sleep or rest according to their needs.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play and investigate in a child-friendly and generally safe environment. Staff protect children by completing a risk assessment of the nursery and the outdoor area. However, not all staff are aware that they should check the safety of their rooms before receiving children to ensure a safe environment at all times. Action is mostly taken to remove any potential hazards and risks are minimised. Staff and visitors are alerted to any identified risks, for example, slippery steps during wet weather. Improvements to furnishings have started being made in the nursery. Although a new carpet has been fitted in one toddler room, some carpets are still badly stained and well-worn, particularly in rooms used by children aged under three years. Room dividers are now showing signs of wear, particularly in areas within reach of children.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe. They use equipment and tools carefully and safely and are learning to pick up any tripping hazards. Children and staff regularly practise evacuation procedures and know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Children use safe and suitable toys that are checked regularly for damage and cleanliness. Any toys within reach of babies are safe to be explored using their hands or mouth. Although the quality and range of toys and equipment is adequate for the whole nursery; in some rooms there is a more limited range of stimulating play materials.

Children are safeguarded as staff are aware of their child protection responsibilities. A child protection policy is in place and staff keep up to date with current procedures through training. The staff are vigilant regarding the security of the children. There is a very good internal telephone system, CCTV is in operation and touch pad entry systems prevent unauthorised access to the premises. Any visitors who enter the premises are carefully monitored.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and familiar with their surroundings in the nursery. Interaction between the children and staff is lively and friendly. Language development is supported by staff who ask questions and make connections between home and nursery, talking about siblings, pets or recent events. Children of all ages enjoying working with a range of creative materials, such as drawing, painting and sticking to enable them to express their experiences, feelings and ideas in a variety of ways.

Children aged under three take part in activities planned to link with the 'Birth to three

matters' framework. They benefit as their key workers make monthly observations and record their achievements to enable staff to plan for their next stages of development. However, in some rooms resources are limited and although staff borrow play materials from other rooms the activities are repetitive and do not allow all children to have stimulating opportunities in all areas of play and learning.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff are developing a sound knowledge of the Curriculum for the foundation stage. They use their knowledge to plan a range of focussed activities covering all six aspects of the curriculum. Activity planning has clear learning intentions to ensure that children acquire new knowledge and skills linked to the monthly themes and topics. Children are very confident and have a high self-esteem. A good balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning opportunities are offered. However, some activities do not always hold the children's interest and at times insufficient challenge is offered to the older or more able children and as a result they are working well within their capabilities. Staff are not yet making the best use of the basic everyday resources that children use each day and they do not have an inventory of play equipment. As a result staff are not yet planning a wide variety of stimulating day-to-day activities to enhance children's learning.

Children have fun while they learn in the indoor learning environment. The rooms used by the funded children have designated areas linked to each area of learning and this allows for messy play and more quieter activities. Children can freely access mark-making resources and they are starting to write their names on pictures and artwork. However, there are missed opportunities for children to practise emergent writing in their role play. Children are starting to solve simple number problems as they count and work out how many plates are needed at mealtimes and they recognise simple shapes in the environment. There are very good opportunities for children to practise their technology skills as they independently use the computer. The staff are not yet making full use of the outdoor area. Although this is used effectively for the children's physical development they are not including the outdoor area when planning for other areas of learning.

Children are developing their knowledge and understanding of the world at the daily circle times. They learn the days of the week, months of the year and observe the weather and changing seasons. Staff are now using carefully formed questions to encourage children's thinking and to extend their vocabulary, for example, when children and staff discuss visiting public places such as the cinema or market. Additional learning opportunities are provided for children when they attend weekly French lessons or music sessions.

Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals as staff are starting to observe, assess and record their achievements and use this information to inform the next steps in learning.

## Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel a sense of belonging as the majority enter the nursery with confidence. They build warm relationships with staff and enjoy making choices about their play. Children are starting to understand responsible behaviour and mostly play harmoniously together. Staff offer plenty of praise and encouragement to raise confidence and self-esteem. Children enjoy taking part in small tasks such as helping to tidy up and show care and respect for each other by sharing or taking turns.

The individual needs of children are mostly met. Regular opportunities for discussion with parents ensure that staff know the children well. Suitable systems are in place to support children with special needs. The older children in the nursery learn about the wider world through celebrating festivals and traditions from around the world. There are some play materials and activities that represent the children who attend and the wider community. However, this is not consistent throughout the nursery and in some rooms there is limited play equipment and resources which would help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are made to feel welcome. A wealth of information is displayed throughout the nursery and parents receive a daily report regarding how much their child has eaten, sleeping arrangements and nappy changes. Curriculum planning is displayed for the parents of funded children and parents' evenings are held where information is shared regarding children's progress and achievements.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's development and welfare are promoted satisfactorily because staff work well as a team when carrying out most aspects of their duties and responsibilities. Children are cared for by staff who have been vetted and have followed robust recruitment and induction procedures. Minimum staffing ratios are met at all times. However, at times staffing levels are fully stretched, particularly when staff are involved in routine tasks such as nappy changing or serving meals. Space within the nursery is effectively organised. Children benefit from having a library, sensory room and the ground floor messy room in addition to the space provided in the home base rooms.

The required documentation for the safe day-to-day management of the nursery and to promote children's welfare and safety is in place. However, staff do not check that parents consistently sign the required consent agreements. Policies and procedures are being updated to meet the revised National Standards and the operational plan is linked to 'Every Child Matters' and is continually being reviewed and revised to create an effective working tool.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There have been significant changes to the management structure since the last inspection. The new management team

have made clear improvements in the organisation of care and nursery education and the outcomes for children. The current managers are building a committed team and are improving the opportunities for staff to attend training and for them to be motivated about their own professional development. The management are now monitoring the provision for care and nursery education by undertaking staff appraisals. However, the curriculum is not consistently being evaluated throughout the nursery in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Overall the range of children's needs are met

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection three recommendations were made and the staff have taken some steps to improve children's welfare and safety. The nursery has started evaluating activities for the youngest children in the nursery and planning for the next steps for children's play, learning and development. However, this is not consistent in all rooms throughout the nursery. Staff have developed their knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities and child protection issues through training. A few additional resources have been provided to promote positive images of disabilities.

At the last inspection for nursery education four key issues were raised. These have mostly been addressed although some points are carried forward following this inspection.

The staff have taken steps to improve their knowledge and understanding of the principles of the Foundation Stage, the stepping stones and early learning goals, and of how children learn. Copies of the Curriculum for the foundation stage are now freely available within the nursery and accessible to all staff working with funded children aged three and four years. An early years curriculum advisor regularly visits the nursery and monitors the staff's progress.

The planning has been developed and extended to provide more variety and first hand experiences for children. Plans now include specific learning intentions and show what has been learnt and plan for the next stages of learning. However, staff are not yet evaluating activities for funded children although planning documents indicate that they should and no record is yet made to show how basic core activities contribute to children's progress. Children's assessment records now include evidence from observations and examples of work to show their progress and what they need to do next.

There has been some improvement in the use of time and resources to allow children greater access to learning experiences and play opportunities. The time spent on passive or routine activities has now been minimised. There are now two sittings for lunch and a snack bar operates so that children spend less time waiting and more time taking part in interactive play.

More resources have been provided for three and four year old children following the last inspection and an adequate range is now offered both indoors and outside.

Children now have more access to toys so they have some control over their learning by making choices about their play.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 there have been three complaints made about the nursery. On 19 May 2004 concerns were raised during an inspection for nursery education. The concerns related to National Standard 2: Organisation regarding overall numbers of children and group sizes. A childcare inspector visited on 19 May 2004 and found that at times the nursery exceeded the total number of children they were registered for. Compliance notices were issued regarding overall numbers and group sizes and a further 10 actions were issued related to National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 3: Care, Learning and Play, National Standard 4: Physical Environment, National Standard 5: Equipment, National Standard 7: Health, National Standard 8: Food and Drink and National Standard 14: Documentation. A further visit was made to the nursery on 02 June 2004 and it was found that the nursery was complying with registration requirements and the actions had been completed.

On 10 October 2005 Ofsted received a complaint regarding the hygiene of the premises, children's individual needs and partnership with parents. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to the provision on 20 October 2005. As a result of the investigation the provider was given 4 actions. They are as follows:

Standard 4: ensure that the premises are clean, adequately ventilated and in suitable state of repair; this refers to progressing enquiries and eliminating the recurrent odours from the drains and the laundry room.

Standard 4: ensure children's privacy when intimate care is being provided; this refers to the absence of toilet doors in the Toddler Room 2.

Standard 6: assess the risks to children in relation to worn upholstery and the dangers from chemicals and take action to minimise these.

Standard 7: make sure that equipment and furnishings are hygienic, clean and safe; this refers to carpets in Toddler Rooms 1 and 2 and the nappy and rubbish bins being covered with lids. Implement systems to monitor hygiene practices and ensure they are maintained.

On 10 October 2005 Ofsted received a separate complaint regarding care for children with special needs and staffing ratios not being maintained. Ofsted investigated this complaint with the above complaint at the unannounced visit to the provision on 20 October 2005. As a result of the investigation into this complaint the provider was given two actions related to National Standard 2: Organisation and National Standard 10: Special Needs. They are as follows:

Standard 2: amend the registration system to show staff deployment and rooms where children are cared for outside core hours.

Standard 10: develop staff members knowledge and understanding of the code of



practice for Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and SEN toolkit

A response to all the above actions was received on 08 November 2005. 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):

- ensure that the premises are clean and maintained in a suitable state of repair. This refers to carpets and dividing screens
- continue to develop the range of toys and resources for children aged under three years so that staff can enhance their delivery of the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- ensure that all relevant consent agreements are consistently signed by parents and carers.

#### **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):

- evaluate and develop the use and range of resources in order to stimulate and maximise the children's learning. Consider how the planning could show how basic core activities contribute to children's progress and how the outdoor area could be used more effectively to enhance children's experiences in all areas of learning
- develop the learning experiences offered to the older or more able children to ensure that activities are adapted to provide sufficient challenge so that they achieve as much as they can.

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