



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 204367

DfES Number: 542890

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 18/05/2004  
Inspector Name Susan Elizabeth Warren

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name Leapfrog Day Nursery (Thurrock)  
Setting Address Drake Road  
Chafford Hundred  
Grays  
Essex  
RM16 6RW

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Leapfrog Day Nurseries (Trading)Ltd 3229362

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Leapfrog Day Nurseries (Trading)Ltd  
Address Central Office  
Second Avenue, Centrum 100  
Burton Upon Trent  
STAFFS  
DE14 2WF

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

### Information about the setting

Leapfrog Day Nursery opened in 2000. It operates from a two-storey premises with a totally enclosed play area and adjacent car park. It is situated on the edge of Chafford Hundred, within easy reach of rail and major road links. The Nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 200 children from 6 weeks to 5 years on roll. This includes 43 funded three year olds and 8 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07:00 until 19:00.

Thirty eight part-time and full time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Twelve staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

## INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

### How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Leapfrog Day Nursery Thurrock is acceptable but has significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by the quality of teaching and significant weaknesses in all areas of learning, except physical development which is generally good.

The quality of teaching has significant weaknesses. Many staff are unsure of the principles of the Foundation Stage and how children learn; as a result planned activities are repetitive, use a limited range of teaching styles and offer too few first hand, practical experiences for children. Care routines tend to dominate so that actual time spent on meaningful, educational learning experiences is limited. Resources in many areas are inadequate for the number of children attending therefore staff are stretched to provide the variety and choices that children need to make good progress. Children only have access to resources selected by staff so cannot develop independence by making choices and decisions.

Staff are caring and interact warmly with the children. Behaviour is generally good although expectations are rigid at times, for example insisting on silence and hands in laps at snacktime.

Assessment records lack evidence and are infrequently updated, relying on memory and a few written observations. Children's worksheets are kept to show to parents.

Leadership and management has significant weaknesses. Staff feel their concerns such as regarding lack of resources, are unmet, resulting in frustration. There is an acknowledgement by management of the problems but action to remedy can be slow. Staff are encouraged to attend training to develop their skills but in some cases attendance is prevented due to lack of cover.

The partnership with parents is generally good; parents have information about the setting and can chat to staff/key workers each day about their child. Open days and social events are well attended.

### What is being done well?

- Staff are warm and caring and have an understanding of individual children's needs.
- Children have 1:1 help to form letters and learn to write their own names.
- Children celebrate a variety of festivals and cultural events throughout the year, both traditional and from around the world.

### What needs to be improved?

- staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn
- organisation and use of time and resources
- resources; to support all areas of learning
- planning and assessment.

**What has improved since the last inspection?**

n/a

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children show an understanding of daily routines. They play and work alone or in groups, completing tasks such as a puzzle or drawing. Children talk about their homes and families. They co-operate, share equipment and help to tidy up when asked. They celebrate festivals and cultural events. Children's independence is limited by set routines such as at snack time, when staff serve children rather than encouraging self help. Much equipment is stored out of reach, so children's access is limited.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children use language to communicate with one another as they play; discussing real and imaginary events. Older children recognise, say and learn to write some letters in their own names. No facilities are provided in the role play area for emergent writing; other forms of mark making such as chalking or painting are not freely available at all times. Children visit the library once a week but the playroom book corner is underused; many books are uninspiring or aimed at older children.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

A maths display table highlights a 'number of the week'. Children have free play with maths equipment such as a sorting set and scales however staff fail to extend or focus the learning for more able children. Worksheets to recognise shapes and numerals are used routinely but have a generally negative effect on learning, as supporting practical, hands-on activities are not planned. Missed opportunities for calculation, i.e. at snack time, mean that children do not develop calculation skills.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Some items of everyday technology are available in the role play area. Children talk about significant events and are developing a sense of time. They use a computer. Opportunities to explore and investigate features of the natural and made world, and of living things are limited; resources are scarce and planned activities lack depth. No water play is provided. Staff do not interact when children use construction kits, their output is limited by lack of guidance. Junk modelling is infrequent.

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children are able to move with control and co-ordination as they travel between rooms. They negotiate stairs safely, form a line and find a space or chair. Basic hygiene routines are understood and followed but a lack of hand towels disrupts handwashing routines. Children are very aware of sun safety. Fine motor control is developed by handling small toys, but tools and malleable materials are very limited. Physical activities lack challenge for more able children, particularly outside play.

**CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children print using a variety of blocks and sponges. Free painting, collage etc is not routinely offered. Plasticene, with rollers and cutters is offered. Instruments are used to explore sound; impromptu sessions are fun and noisy. Imaginative play is limited by scant resources; dressing up clothes and props are minimal and dolls are dirty, with no clothes at all. Role play is repetitive as the area is not changed or themed. Small world items include farm animals, dinosaurs and road layouts.

**Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.**

## **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

## **WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES**

- take steps to improve staff knowledge and understanding of the principles of the Foundation Stage, the stepping stones and early learning goals, and of how children learn
- review the use of time and resources to maximise children's access to good quality, interactive and first hand learning experiences and play opportunities. Minimise the time spent on passive or routine activities
- ensure that sufficient and suitable resources are provided to allow development in all areas of learning both indoors and outside. Make resources accessible to children to enable them to have some control over their learning by choosing freely
- develop and extend the planning to provide more variety and first hand experiences for children. Plans should include specific learning intentions, and evaluations; to show what has been learned and inform the next stages of planning/learning. Plans should show how basic, core activities contribute to children's progress. Assessment records must be systematic and ongoing and include evidence, i.e. from observations or dated, annotated examples of work, to show what children have done and what they need to do next.

*The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.*