



## **Leapfrog Day Nursery - Mill Hill**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	147572
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 May 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Maggie Thorp / Pauline Nazarkardeh
<b>Setting Address</b>	30 Millway, Mill Hill, London, NW7 3RB
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<b>Registered person</b>	Leapfrog Day Nurseries (Trading) Ltd
<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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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 has been registered since December 2000 and is part of the chain of Leap Frog Day Nurseries. The group operates from a residential building which has been converted to accommodate the needs of the nursery. The nursery is situated in a largely residential area of Mill Hill in the London Borough of Barnet.

Children play and are cared for in five groups according to their age. On the ground

floor there are three suites of rooms: a suite for babies, a suite for toddlers and a suite for two-year-olds. Upstairs is a small group of rising three-year-olds and two rooms for the group of three to five year olds. Children based upstairs share a hallway, bathroom and another playroom. All children use the outdoor play area. Adult facilities include the reception area, kitchen, laundry room, visitors and staff toilets and a small staff room.

Currently there are 118 children on roll. Of these, some children attend full time and some attend on a part time basis. The group receive nursery education funding for a total of 32 children. Of these children, 26 are three-year-olds and six children are four-year olds. Children who speak English as an additional language attend. The nursery operates from Monday to Friday between 07:00 to 19:00 all year round.

The manager and nine of the 18 staff working with the children have appropriate early years qualifications. The staff complement also includes an administrator, cook, kitchen assistant and two nursery assistants. The nursery receives advice and support from the company headquarters and their area support workers and from the Barnet local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are kept healthy through being cared for in a clean environment with effective measures in place to prevent the spread of infection. Floors, surfaces and sinks are cleaned regularly by new contract cleaners, a deep cleaning of the nursery has been done and redecoration is underway. Regular deep cleaning has been booked to maintain this. Bathrooms and changing mats are in good condition, toys and equipment are clean and there is now a rota maintained for cleaning equipment and toys. Environmental health guidance has been followed to deal with the infestation by pests.

Children's health and well being are safeguarded by the high number of first aid trained staff and the policy and information given to parents about excluding children with infections. The system for ensuring medicine is administered appropriately has been reviewed recently to ensure weaknesses identified have been addressed.

Children are generally well nourished by the healthy foods offered them and each child's particular needs and preferences are accommodated. A cook on the premises prepares fresh foods which include lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. Both child care and kitchen staff are alert to children's dietary needs. However, the timing and organisation of meals can result in some children having to wait quite a while for food. Meals are not served out at the table and children are not seated in small consistent groups with their key workers so this does not make meals cosy social occasions. In addition, drinking water is not available throughout the day to all children.

Toddlers and older children enjoy fresh air and exercise everyday weather permitting,

and they are able to make good progress in their physical development as they participate in ball games, use climbing equipment and wheeled toys in the garden. However, babies do not have opportunities to enjoy being in the fresh air and babies and toddlers have few opportunities for large physical play indoors.

Children over three years have regular opportunities to develop their physical skills. They are developing very good fine manipulative skills. They use scissors to cut materials, use glue spreaders and hold pencils and paint brushes of differing sizes with good control. Opportunities to develop children's large motor skills are less well established. The outdoor area cannot be accessed by the children independently, however staff provide regular opportunities to access outdoor play. How to develop children's large physical skills is beginning to be identified in the curriculum planning

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Some effective measures are in place to protect children's safety. Children's access to hazards is prevented by such measures as finger guards on door hinges, electrical sockets being covered and cleaning materials being stored out of children's reach. Weaknesses identified in the security of the garden gates have been addressed. The systems in place to monitor who is on the premises keeps children safe; all those entering and leaving the nursery all must sign in and out. Security locks prevent access to those without electronics keys. Children's well being is safe guarded by staff who have sufficient understanding of the signs of possible child abuse and who know the appropriate procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Most children play, eat, sleep in a light and spacious environment. However, the rising 3 year olds are in a small room with little opportunity to explore other areas unless the whole group goes. Some of the benefits of the amount of space designated to each group of children under three is lost because children are often led into one of their interconnected rooms and the door or gate is shut to the other spaces. Some children become bored at these times and try to leave the area or stand looking through the low windows in the doors. The space for adults is limited and there is little space for line management meetings, to complete records, or for confidential discussion between staff and parents. Children over two years have easy access to bathrooms, and the low toilets and sinks with accessible soap and paper towels foster children's independence. Children have all the equipment they need for eating, sleeping and play. It is suitable, in good condition but toys are not sufficiently accessible to enable children to choose freely in the under three year olds' rooms.

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

The provision is inadequate.

Babies enjoy the warmth and gentle handling of staff and are encouraged by the enthusiasm staff show when they see babies achieve new skills. A baby beginning to move independently towards a toy is praised for his efforts. However, the variety of play materials and resources babies have to choose from is limited so this reduces

their motivation to explore and learn and results in babies becoming bored and restless. Unsettled babies do not feel confident enough to explore. Staff plan with parents ways to help children feel more secure but they do not address babies' fundamental need for few and consistent carers so that strong supportive relationships can develop.

There is a system in place for observing and monitoring children's progress, identifying the next stage of their development and weaving this into weekly and daily plans, but it is not fully understood and implemented by staff. As a result toddlers are often not engaged and actively involved in their play. They are not finding out about the world using their whole bodies and all their senses. The organisation of the room, routines and play materials provide children with little freedom to make decisions, to move freely or choose from a range of play materials. Children are taken into another room to paint but without being involved in the decision. Painting is not set out in a way that enables children to fully explore and enjoy this. Toddlers using the pretend play resources do not get very involved in feeding dolls or using the cars because they are not set out attractively. Children are restricted to one of the three play areas at a time and toys are mainly stored on high shelves. Therefore this age group's innate desire to be on the move, filling and tipping, climbing and exploring is not being fostered.

The two year olds have some fun activity times but they too are often bored and restless and have little opportunity to play freely and choose from a wide range of resources. Their time is overly organised and children are expected to sit in large groups of 12 or more to listen to stories or learn colour names. This is not appropriate for this age group. Children quickly become restless and are unable to understand or pay attention to the activity. They enjoy outside play and dancing to music, but even here the presentation of these activities is not finely tuned to the needs of individual children. The area for dancing is small and children not wanting to participate are not free to draw or play in other areas.

## Nursery Education

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and in the main, children are successfully engaged in a range of interesting practical activities. Staff show a growing awareness of the foundation stage guidance and children are supported in their enquiry through the way staff demonstrate new tasks and are beginning to use open ended questions. Children benefit from the new planning and assessment systems, but they do not yet benefit from an established system to identify their learning priorities to ensure they have consistently suitable challenges.

Children are confident; they show sound levels of concentration and persevere in their chosen tasks. They use calculators confidently to identify number sequences and to show their age on the display. Friendships are beginning to be established as children learn to share and take turns and to build positive relationships with staff. Children's learning however is not always extended, for example they do not participate in the organisation of snack and meal times nor do they independently select resources in all aspects of their play. This means that they receive too few chances to develop their independence and to strengthen their self help skills through the daily routines.

Children speak confidently as they engage adults in conversation, expressing their ideas and experiences; their emergent writing is displayed in the pre school room. Children engage in a variety of creative opportunities and enjoy making marks and this is beginning to be linked to the planning systems to establish writing for a purpose. Children enjoy books; they listen to stories as part of a group and while having individual attention in the book area. There are some excellent displays to show children's recording of their favourite stories for example "Goldilocks and the three bears" and "Jack and the beanstalk".

Children express themselves creatively and they are skilled in their role play. They act out events in their lives and allocate roles to each other. The role play area provides a good range of resources and this helps children to express their ideas and feelings imaginatively.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is inadequate.

Some younger children are not settled and secure because the key person system is not effective in ensuring that children experience continuity of care. In addition staff do not know their key children well. Children who are unsettled are not consistently handled by their special person, for example, other staff come to the baby room to relieve baby room staff or help when they are busy. This results in babies being handled by five different people over one day and adds to the distress of any baby finding it difficult to settle.

Younger children are not learning to value the different cultures and abilities of others or enjoy seeing their own background reflected in the provision. This is because staff do not have a clear understanding of how to do this. Children under two years have few books or play materials that show diversity. Staff are unsure of the backgrounds of their key children or how links between home and nursery can be made. Children do learn that fun can be had with all toys and that certain toys are not just for boys or just for girls. Older children are starting to learn about others cultures and beliefs. Since the last inspection new resources have been put in place and staff are developing how to celebrate festivals with children as part of their planning. Overall their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Currently no children with special needs attend, however, there is a special educational needs co-ordinator to support the needs of any future children. The Special Educational Needs Policy is appropriate for enabling children to be included, involved and to make progress.

Children relate well to each other overall and behaviour is generally good. Children over three years are learning about the difference between right and wrong. They have helped to make the rules for their group and can point these out to others.

However, younger children are sometimes unsure why they are doing wrong and they are not always supported in their attempts to share. Staff's management of children's behaviour is not consistent across the nursery nor does it follow the nursery's behaviour management policy. Staff call out to children about what they are

doing wrong rather than emphasising what the positive thing is that they want the child to do. For example a child is told "No, let go!" and another "That's not nice." rather than "Let's play with this together." or "Can I help you find another one?" Some staff remove toys or move children in dispute with each other with no explanation or without helping them to find a solution to the dispute. Children too young to sit still for long are punished for being restless or for moving away from the group activity.

Not all children benefit from close supportive relationships between staff and parents or from bridges being built for children between home and nursery. Some good information is given to parents about how the nursery operates and what is provided for children. All the required consents are obtained, for example for medical treatment in an emergency. However, the information parents are given does not always reflect practice, for example, in regard to the key person system. In addition, parents are not able to share in their children's learning through being provided with regular meaningful information about children's achievements and progress.

Information for parents about how to complain does not include Ofsted's role as the regulator and how to contact Ofsted. Some parents have expressed concern about how well their concerns are followed up. However, the nursery has recently taken steps keep parents better informed. They held a meeting about the results of their last inspection and how the actions raised would be addressed and offered one to one sessions for parents with particular concerns or who were unable to come to the meeting.

The partnership with parents and carers of older children is satisfactory. Parents and carers are beginning to receive information in both written and verbal form on how the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage is used and the ways in which they can become involved in their children's learning. The base room supervisor is actively working to develop her skills in working with parents and carers.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is inadequate.

Some children are happy and well cared for but others are less secure and therefore less able to explore, play and develop because the deployment and training of staff and the implementation of the key person system is not well organised. Staff working with children under three have an incomplete understanding of this age group. They are unclear about what is good practice in regard to organising the day and the environment to foster children's curiosity and encourage their independence effectively. Training on how to work well with this age group has begun to be disseminated to staff but staff still are unsure of how to put this into action and there are no well qualified and experienced senior staff leading good practice in each group.

A new manager and deputy have been appointed and are very recently in post. They have a good understanding of sound practice and are well qualified. They have clear plans for how to support staff in raising the quality of practice. The company have sent area managers to support the change in management and to improve practice. However, there is very little time or space for staff to discuss and reflect on their

practice and to plan. Monthly staff meetings are held in the evening after some staff have completed ten hour shifts and there is little opportunity for one to one line management meetings to support staff's development.

In regard to nursery education, the leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The new manager shows an awareness of the settings strengths and weaknesses and has action plans in place to address areas of concern. The local advisory teacher works closely with the pre school staff to put in place a curriculum to meet the individual needs of the children attending.

Overall children benefit from the systems that have been put in place to improve the cleanliness and safety of the nursery. They are protected from harm as staff have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures that the group uses in emergency situations. However, younger children do not benefit from the policies on behaviour management and equal opportunities because they are not effectively put into practice. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

Since the last inspection limited improvements have been made. There have been improvements to protect children's health and safety. The recommendations of the Environmental Health Department have been acted upon, the whole nursery is cleaner and systems have been put in place to maintain this. Children's safety has been improved by more thorough risk assessment and prompt action by the new manager and deputy when risks are identified. Staff are now aware of the signs of possible child abuse and know how to proceed if they have concerns about a child's welfare. Children benefit from there being a well qualified person in charge throughout each day. Space for the youngest children to sleep undisturbed has been provided. Good progress has been made to enable nursery education funded children to learn and grow in confidence and independence.

However, the training, deployment and support of staff is still not effective in ensuring staff have a full understanding of appropriate group care of children under 3 years. Monitoring systems check staff child ratios but the organisation of how rooms are used, resources are stored and set out and how the key person system is operated do not enhance young children's experiences at the nursery or promote younger children's security, confidence and independence.

The management of older children's behaviour is very positive and children are gaining a good understanding of right and wrong. However, this is not so for the younger children. For example, large group times leave children bored and restless and this is interpreted as poor behaviour not poor organisation of activities. An effective equal opportunities policy is yet to be implemented so links are not made between children's home life and the nursery, and ways of helping children value backgrounds different to theirs' are not planned.

The partnership with parents has been aided by the meeting to discuss the last inspection report and share the nursery's action plan. Parents have more information



about the Foundation Stage guidance for supporting older children's learning and some information about the framework used to encourage the younger children's progress. However, regular information about what children are achieving and how the next steps in their learning are being planned for, is yet to be fully provided. In addition, parents are not provided with clear information about Ofsted's role regarding complaints.

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

Ofsted received one complaint in February 2006 and one in May 2006. A number of concerns were raised these cover National Standards 1: Suitable person, 2: Organisation, 3: Care learning and play, Standard 7: Health and Standard 12 Partnership with parents. The reported concerns related to suitable staff qualifications, correct adult child ratios not being consistently maintained and a lack of activities and craft resources available for children. In addition concerns were raised about a pest infestation, the general level of hygiene in the nursery and communication with parents.

An unannounced investigation visit was made on 16th February 2006. Four actions to improve practice were set around National Standards, 2: Organisation, regarding the deployment of staff and 7: Health, regarding the hygiene of the nursery.

Following this a full inspection was carried out on 21 February 2006. The previous actions had not been fully met. A compliance notice was served regarding the hygiene of the nursery. In addition 9 actions were set regarding National Standards 2: Organisation; 3: Care Learning and Play; 4: Environment; 6: Safety; 9: Equal Opportunities; 11: Behaviour; 12 Partnership with Parents; 13: Child Protection; and 14: Documentation. A warning letter was issued regarding hygiene and 9 actions were set regarding the other National Standards. An unannounced visit was made on 12th April 2006 to regarding the compliance notice about National Standard 7: Health concerning hygiene levels. This had not been complied with not and the provider had not met the action set regarding National Standard 6 Safety or had fully met all the other actions. A warning letter was sent and a compliance notice issued regarding National Standard 6: Safety.

An unannounced visit was made on 23rd May 2006 and a visit on 24th May to monitor the compliance notices for National Standards 6: Safety and 7: Health and carry out a full inspection. Improvements had been made in the areas identified in the compliance notices and the provider was now meeting National Standards 6 and 7. The actions regarding National Standards 13: Child protection and 14: Documentation had been met. Progress had been made regarding National Standards 2: Organisation; 3: Care, learning and play; 4: Environment; 9: Equal Opportunities; 11: Behaviour and 12: Partnership with parents, but the provider had not fully met these Standards. The seven actions shown in this report were agreed. The registered provider remains qualified to provide full day care.

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 registered provider remains qualified to provide full day care.

## 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve and implement the operational plan so that appropriately qualified and experienced supervisors are in place in all base rooms and staff have appropriate time to plan, discuss and evaluate their work
- establish an effective system to ensure there are consistent staff to care for the children in their key groups
- develop and implement a rigorous system to support, monitor and review the management of the nursery and the action plan
- improve all staff's understanding of child development for the under threes, so that they plan and provide effectively for this age group, in line with the Birth to three matters framework
- ensure all staff actively promote equality of opportunity for all children in respect of accessing a range of resources that value their own home culture and that of others
- ensure all adults caring for children are able manage a wide range of behaviour and to organise the day in a way which promotes children's welfare and development
- promote positive partnerships with parents and carers by regularly sharing meaningful information with them about their children's progress
- make sure that information regarding Ofsted's role as the regulator is available and shared with parents.

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

#### 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):

- strengthen staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to further enhance the quality of teaching and learning
- provide children with greater opportunities to develop their self help skills and increase their independence
- put in place a system for planning and assessment in order to identify children's individual learning priorities and use these to inform future plans

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