



Leapfrog Day Nursery - Braintree

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	405269
Inspection date	21 February 2006
Inspector	Julie Ann Birkett
Setting Address	Galleys Corner, Braintree Road, Cressing, Braintree, Essex, CM7 8GA
Telephone number	01376 344416
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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 Nursery, Braintree, is one of a national chain of nurseries. It opened in 2001 and operates from a purpose-built building. It is situated on a small commercial estate on the outskirts of Braintree. A maximum of 109 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:00 to 19:00 all year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 147 children aged from birth to under 8 years on roll. Of these 46

children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from both the local and wider catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 27 staff. There are 18 staff, including the manager, who hold appropriate qualifications. There are 3 staff who are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for in an environment where appropriate hygiene practices are maintained by staff. For example, staff wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies and tables are cleaned with anti-bacterial cleanser to help prevent cross-infection. Children learn about hygiene and personal care through daily routines, such as, putting their hands over their mouths when they cough and wiping their noses. Younger children are helped to wash their hands before meals and the older children do this independently. Posters in the pre-school room give children visual reminders of how to use the toilet and wash their hands properly.

Children have their dietary needs met because the staff request information from parents and carers about the children's dietary requirements and any allergies. Menus are displayed for parents and carers to see and the younger children's daily record cards show parents and carers what their child has eaten. Meal times are social occasions with staff and children sitting together. The younger children are encouraged to feed themselves while the older children's independence is fostered as they help to lay the tables and serve themselves. Freshly cooked, nutritious meals are cooked on the premises. Children are provided with healthy choices at snack and meal times and enjoy fresh fruit or vegetables at every meal. However, staff do not regularly use these daily opportunities to promote children's understanding of the importance of healthy eating.

Children participate in a range of indoor and outdoor activities which contribute to their physical development and fitness. For example, children develop their large motor skills and coordination as they run, climb and use bikes in the garden. Inside, the children enjoy dancing and ring games or running through shredded paper while chasing balloons and bubbles. The very youngest children develop their skills as they crawl through tunnels and play peek-a-boo games. However, children are not learning effectively about the importance of daily exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle because staff do not use regular opportunities to talk about it.

Children's health is promoted because the staff are well informed about the children's health care matters and all necessary consents are in place to support this. Children receive appropriate care if they are ill or have an accident because there are procedures in place to prevent the spread of infection and there are staff who are first aid trained.

Children's emotional well-being is fostered through the quality of interaction of staff. For example, cuddles are freely given and the babies enjoy snuggling into a member of staff while being rocked in a chair.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, very safe and secure environment. Security measures are robust and implemented well. For example, security cameras monitor the nursery and all visitors are challenged and have to sign in. A key fob and touch pad entry systems prevent unauthorised access to the premises. Children's safety is promoted through the vigilance of the management team who carry out regular and thorough risk assessments of the premises. There is a designated person for health and safety and all staff make daily checks of the premises to ensure the children's safety. Children use suitable and safe toys that are checked regularly for damage and cleanliness.

Children's awareness of everyday safety is reinforced effectively when they are reminded to walk inside and to take turns on the slide. Children understand that things have to be picked up off the floor to prevent tripping and that spilt sand has to be swept up to prevent them slipping on it. Children enjoy using the large climbing equipment on the safety surface. This enables children to practise and extend their skills in safety while under the watchful eye of staff. Children and staff regularly practise evacuation procedures and know what to do in the event of an emergency. Children are beginning to learn about safety outside of the nursery when they have visits from the local fire service.

Children are well supervised by staff at all times which contributes to their safety. Staff implement the appropriate safety procedures and documentation is well maintained to ensure the children's safety is promoted. Children are safeguarded because staff are aware of their child protection responsibilities and give top priority to children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and familiar with their surroundings and come into nursery happily and quickly settle to play. The few younger children who need a little extra support to say goodbye to their parents and carers are offered cuddles and are soothed by sensitive staff. Children's language development is promoted through staff's interaction with them. The babies respond well to the staff and are beginning to repeat familiar words and actions. Older children talk comfortably about their families, pets and recent events.

Children under three benefit from a range of planned activities based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Regular observation of what the children can do are carried out by staff so that they can plan the children's next steps. The babies have

very good opportunities to develop their skills. For example, they explore and develop their muscles and coordination as they roll around the floor and are stimulated by the sound making equipment they pat and kick. The toddlers engage in simple imaginative play as they make pretend cups of tea in the home play area. They enjoy exploring a range of natural and man-made materials. For example, touching fabrics and items hanging from the walls and playing with cold custard. Children aged between two and three years enjoy planned sticking and drawing activities and imaginative free play. However, the range of activities and how they are presented in this room, in particular, are not very exciting. Some equipment is incomplete or insufficient to enable children to gain the most out of them. For example, children were frustrated because they could not finish the puzzles because pieces were missing and the home corner area was poorly resourced.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and enables children to make progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this to plan a range of activities and experiences to promote the children's development. The indoor space is well organised. Children benefit from the free flow play between the two adjoining base rooms because they have access to a wider range of activities. Children enjoy a range of equipment and resources readily available at their level and access further equipment from low level storage. Children have scheduled times and planned activities in the garden. The children have access to a play area and a small sensory garden where they see, smell and touch as well as grow plants. However, staff do not make full use of the outside area as a learning resource and they are not including all the areas of learning when planning for outdoor play.

Children benefit from a range of teaching methods. For example, working one to one with a member of staff or in small and large groups. Children's own ideas and suggestions are acted upon and encouraged by staff. The small team of pre-school staff get to know the children well. Staff make regular observations of the children to ensure they have a good understanding of what the children can do. They meet regularly to discuss planning for the children's next steps. Many written plans show what support can be provided for the younger children. The stretching of the more able children's abilities is not frequently shown in the planning and some activities lack sufficient challenge to continue to extend these children's skills and knowledge.

Children have keen attitudes to learning. They are curious and want to explore resources and activities. Children behave well and are able to share and take turns. They are able to negotiate with friends verbally and therefore all work and play together happily. Children are confident and articulate speakers. They express their ideas and thoughts as they play. Children enjoy listening to and participating in stories and rhymes. Children learn to recognise their names when they register themselves at the snack bar. They have many daily opportunities to practise their mark making skills with some children writing their own names. Children are learning to recognise letters and the sounds they make.

Children's mathematical development is promoted well through a range of daily

spontaneous and planned activities. Children readily count and use their fingers to represent number when they sing '10 green bottles'. They make charts to record their findings, for example, the number of jumps they can do and the colour of their eyes. They talk about more and less and are beginning to solve simple number problems. Children learn concepts such as weight, height and volume in practical ways. For example, when they fill buckets of sand and bowls of water and build towers.

Children sing and dance and use instruments to make music. They explore a range of natural and man-made resources and paint, draw and make models. Children design and build with a range of materials and use tools effectively to mark, cut and join. They use a range of simple technology, such as, sand timers and calculators and are able to use the computers independently.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel a sense of belonging to the nursery with the older children telling the inspector "it's my nursery". All children are warmly welcomed by staff. There is an ethos of inclusion and there are appropriate systems in place to care for children with special needs.

The children's confidence and self-esteem is promoted by seeing their own work on the walls and being able to take an active part in the daily routines. For example, children help to tidy up and take part in story time sessions. Children's independence is fostered when they are encouraged to do up their own coats, get their own drinks and choose their own activities.

Children's behaviour is good and they are polite and helpful, even the very young children are encouraged to say thank you. Children have a clear understanding of the boundaries of behaviour and are developing an understanding of right and wrong. Children are learning to deal with their own emotions and understand how other's feel. Staff manage children's behaviour well and give clear, age appropriate explanations to help the children develop self-control. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement from the staff. Children feel valued because staff take the time to listen to them and notice the good things they have done. The pre-school children are encouraged to be helpful through a sticker system, while the younger children are equally as proud helping a member of staff prepare the table for a painting activity.

Children develop an understanding of their own and the wider society through planned topics and everyday opportunities. For example, going for walks and visits to the garden centre. They celebrate festivals and traditions from around the world. Children are learning to consider others when they take part in fund raising events for charities. Children have access to some play materials that reflect positive images of gender, culture and ethnicity to help them develop a positive sense of themselves and others. For example, during a planned topic children used a toy guide dog to help them understand, through a practical play experience, about people with disabilities.

The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff are very welcoming to parents and carers and there is an open door policy. An initial profile of each child is drawn up between staff and parents and carers and the younger children's observations folders are sent home regularly. Parents and carers in the under three's rooms receive a written daily report of their child's routines. There is information available on the notice boards throughout the nursery. There are some opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in their child's learning. For example, raising their awareness of learning topics through newsletters, notice boards and 'activities at home' sheets. Curriculum planning is displayed and open evenings are held to share children's progress and achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's development and welfare are promoted satisfactorily because staff work well as a team and understand their roles and responsibilities. Children are protected because all the staff checks have been undertaken to ensure that adults working with the children are suitable to do so. There are robust recruitment and induction procedures in place. Over half the staff have childcare qualifications and all staff demonstrate a commitment to ongoing professional development. They have opportunities to attend workshops and short courses to acquire new skills and knowledge.

Organisation of time and space promotes the children's development overall. They enjoy the sensory room and garden in addition to time spent in their base rooms. The nursery routine enables children to have time for free play, choosing from a selection of activities and experiences that staff plan to promote children's enjoyment and learning. Children also work in small and large groups throughout the session on more adult led focussed activities.

Children, particularly the very youngest, benefit from the key worker system developed to establish secure bonds with familiar adults. For example, during nappy changing the key worker chats and sings with one of her key children as would a parent or carer at home.

Paperwork and documentation is in order and promotes the children's safety and welfare. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated, if necessary, to ensure that they are still meaningful in working practice.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The management team work well together. They have assessed the nursery's strengths and weaknesses and have identified areas for improvement. Staff are working towards the devised plan of action to address the issues. Regular staff meetings are held to review the childcare practice in the nursery.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two actions were set and staff have made good progress in improving the promotion of children's health and welfare. The staff have organised the space for meal times so that the younger children sit in small groups in different areas of the rooms. This arrangement provides opportunities for children to enjoy social meal times and for their individual needs to be met more appropriately in a calmer environment. The nursery has also reviewed procedures for cleaning and maintaining hygiene. The staff use daily cleaning checklists to ensure that nursery procedures are followed to promote the children's health.

At the last inspection for nursery education one action was raised. This has been partially addressed and overall satisfactory progress has been made.

Organisation of staff and resources, including teaching methods, ensures that, overall, children are offered a range of activities to interest them. Some new equipment has been purchased to enhance the children's learning. For example, larger climbing equipment has been installed in the garden to provide children with more challenge in their physical development. Curriculum planning frequently shows how less able children will be supported and occasionally how the more able will be challenged. However, some aspects of the curriculum still lack sufficient and stimulating challenge for the most able children to ensure they continue to make progress. Staff make regular observations of the children and in some cases their next steps are identified. The nursery are continuing to improve their systems for tracking the children's progress and planning for their next steps.

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been one complaint since the last inspection.

Ofsted received a complaint which raised concerns about staff to child ratios (Standard 2), no manager on site (Standard 2), staff deployment (Standard 2), ability of the manager to conduct their role (Standard 1) and an accident in which a staff member's child injured themselves (Standards 7 and 14). Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit on 25 August 2005. The inspectors found that there were sufficient staff on the premises, but sometimes ratios are not met for short periods in specific rooms. There was no evidence to substantiate a lack of managerial competence or inadequate managerial cover. There was an accident to a staff member's child, but the parent was satisfied with how it was handled.

The provider was given 2 actions under Standards 2 and 14 to ensure staffing ratios for each room are maintained at all times and to notify Ofsted, at the earliest opportunity, of any serious accidents to a child while at the setting. The provider responded in writing within the required timescales and Ofsted was satisfied with the response to the actions set.

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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- make further use of everyday routines and opportunities to promote children's understanding of the importance of healthy living
- continue to develop the range, organisation and presentation of resources for children aged one to three years so that staff can enhance their delivery of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to further promote children's development and learning

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):

- develop the planning and provision of activities and experiences further to ensure the more able children are provided with sufficient challenge across all the areas of learning to enable them to continue to make progress towards the early learning goals
- develop planning and use of the outdoor area to enhance children's experiences in all the six areas of learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk