

Link & Learn Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	508010
Inspection date	17 October 2007
Inspector	Karen Louise Prager

Setting Address	Link Centre, Ike Gradwell Community Suite, Link Centre, Whitehill Way, Swindon, Wilts, SN5 7DL
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Telephone number	01793 465464
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E-mail

Registered person	Link & Learn Pre-School
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Sessional care
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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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Link and Learn Pre-School opened in 1995. It operates from the Ike Gradwell Suite of the Link Centre, in Swindon. The pre-school serves the local area.

The pre-school is registered to care for 24 children from three to five years old. There are currently 11 children from three to under five years on roll. All children attending currently receive funding for Nursery Education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00.

Three members of staff work with the children. Two members of staff have a suitable early years qualification and one member of staff is currently on a training programme. The setting receives support from an early years teaching consultant from the Swindon Sure Start Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and hygienic environment. They learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well planned daily routines and systems. Children are taught to independently wash their hands after using the toilet or before snack to prevent the spread of germs. Staff protect children from cross-contamination by following good hygiene procedures when preparing food. Children are protected if they have an accident or become ill as staff are trained in first aid practice and follow effective health policies.

Children are beginning to understand the positive benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They regularly participate in physical exercise and enjoy riding bikes, balancing on stilts and playing with the tools in the sandpit. Children enjoy making the choice of whether to play outside for part of the session. Children are reminded to dress warmly for outdoor play and when on local walks and this increases their understanding of protecting themselves in a variety of weather conditions. They stay healthy due to the variety of fruits available throughout the term at snack times. All children have their individual dietary needs met and preferences taken account of by the knowledgeable staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and secure environment indoors and outside. Children's art work is attractively displayed to ensure they feel valued in the setting. Prominent displays of current plans, the daily menu and current pre-school news ensure parents are fully informed about the setting. Children's risk of accidental injury is effectively minimised as staff follow the policies and procedures to ensure that the pre-school is safe and suitable. Staff supervise children well to ensure their security throughout the day and during busy arrival and departure times. Evacuation procedures are practised to ensure children stay calm and safe in the event of an emergency. Children's welfare is protected as staff have good knowledge of current child protection policy and procedures.

The bright room is well organised to give children areas where they can be active or rest in peace. Children play with good quality toys and materials that are maintained to a high standard. They develop their independence as they choose which activities to participate in, mostly from activities pre-selected by staff. The children enjoy using the outdoor area, though this is currently not fully developed to make best use of the space and resources.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and enjoy their time at the setting. They display quiet confidence and work well independently, beside others or as part of a group. They are beginning to develop negotiation skills and play cooperatively with their peers. Their concentration is developing well as they participate in self-chosen activities and at group times.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Children have opportunities to access a curriculum that incorporates the six areas of learning. Staff are confident in encouraging children's learning through practical everyday routines, for example, developing maths skills at snack time and literacy skills at registration. Plans are clear and have identified learning outcomes for children. This enables staff to know what children are expected to gain from activities. However, some activities are introduced to the children without explanation which means that children do not make the links in their learning.

Staff know the individual children in their care well, and their abilities and individual stages of development. Their progress is monitored through regular observations of children at play, during both focused activities, as well as during spontaneous play. Assessments are discussed at planning meetings, and used to inform planning. However, this knowledge is not always recorded in the children's developmental file.

Children separate from their main carer with increasing confidence and develop friendships amongst their peers. They learn to take care of their environment when they tidy away their toys and recognise the importance of re-cycling used paper and cardboard. Children are keen to participate in a range of activities and enjoy choosing floor toys for the session. They demonstrate concern for their peers, offering support when a child hurt herself. Children speak with increasing confidence and most are able to make themselves well understood. They show interest in letters, and are developing a good knowledge of the sounds they make. Children are beginning to recognise familiar words, for example, when they read their names at snack time. More able children recognise their friends names as well, as can be seen when they re-organise names to ensure they are able to sit by their friends. Children listen with interest to stories, and enjoy joining in with rhymes and songs.

Children count the number of children present and engage in solving simple problems, for example, when staff do not supply enough cups at snack time children are able to say how many more are needed. Children show interest in shapes as they build and complete puzzles. They are increasingly able to recognise and name a variety of shapes. Children have some opportunities to develop skills in ICT through the use of small electronic toys and equipment in role play situations. They frequently remember and talk about past events that have happened at home and within the pre-school.

Children move freely and with pleasure and confidence both indoors and outside. Hand-eye control develops well through the regular use of pencils and puzzles. Children learn to manage their body as they ride tricycles, balance on stilts and move to recorded music. They begin to come aware of the effect that exercise has on their body when they feel their heart beat faster or get warm after a vigorous activity. Through topic work and discussion children are gaining a good understanding of the wider world, for example, when they learn to count to 10 in Spanish.

Children make marks and give meaning to these, for example, when using templates to draw animals. They start to write their name on their pictures and write with a purpose in role play situations. Children are able to join in favourite songs and start to recognise rhyming words. Children have opportunities at group time to explore the sound of a variety of instruments and enjoy banging and shaking in time to familiar songs. There are daily opportunities for children to explore different materials, such as paint or play-dough. They enjoy re-creating a snowy forest scene connected with their current mini-topic on Slovakia using painted foam shapes and cotton wool.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the setting and are settled, happy and confident in the staff's care. Children have their individual needs identified and met well. Detailed records compiled by the child's keyworker are shared with all staff. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children gain a sense of belonging. They regularly learn about their own and other's needs and beliefs. Children participate in a variety of activities that help them learn about others in their community, for example, when looking at a picture of a child's holiday in Slovakia and creating winter forest pictures. Diverse images of children are displayed around the pre-school to encourage children's positive attitudes towards similarities and differences. Children form positive relationships with adults and play cooperatively with their friends in small groups. They behave very well in the setting and are gaining a good awareness of what is right and wrong. The appropriate special needs policy is effectively translated into practice. Staff work very well with parents and external agencies to fully support children with additional needs.

The partnership with parents of children who receive pre-school education is good. Children benefit from staff maintaining friendly relationships with parents who receive good information relating to children's care and education. Parents receive clear information regarding the preschool's activities. Through daily discussion and through formal meetings parents become aware of their children's progress and learning achievements. At these times there are opportunities to contribute to children's assessments. Parents receive useful information about the Foundation Stage and early learning goals. They receive clear information on the topics being covered which includes ways that parents can support and extend their children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's development and welfare is secured as well-written policies and procedures promote the effective management of the provision. Appropriate induction for all staff ensures they are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. The management team ensures that good levels of staff are maintained and their appropriate deployment supports children's care and play.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is good. The staff team work well together, and with external agencies, to identify areas for improvement. Staff are working hard to ensure the provision for children is continually improving. Children benefit from staff being trained in health and safety, child protection and first aid to protect their well-being. Informal systems are in place to monitor teaching and learning. This ensures that staff development needs are identified to improve children's learning in the Foundation Stage. The provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous education inspection two key issues were agreed to further support children's education. These were to develop the staff's programme of assessment and monitoring of the educational provision in order to ensure regular observations and assessments are undertaken on children across all areas of development and cluster groups, and to develop the staff's partnership with parents, to ensure parents are encouraged to share with staff what they know

about their child, to aid ongoing assessment. The observation and assessment of children, both by staff and parents is now used to aid planning and children's learning.

At the previous care inspection two recommendations were agreed. These were to ensure the complaints procedure includes information about the regulator and that the surfacing of the outside play area does not pose a hazard to children. Documentation has improved to include information about the regulator in the complaints procedure. Staff practices have improved as the use of the outdoor area is closely monitored to ensure children do not trip on the raised paving slabs.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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

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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):

- develop the outdoor area to encompass stimulating activities from all six areas of the Foundation Stage.

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 written observations and assessments of the children to reflect what the staff know about the children
- develop teaching to increase children's knowledge of the links between the current topic and the activities available.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk