

Link & Learn Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Karen Prager

Setting address

Link Centre, Ike Gradwell Community Suite, Link Centre,
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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Link and Learn Pre-School is a committee run pre-school which opened in 1995. It operates from the Ike Gradwell Suite of the Link Centre, in Swindon. Children have direct access to an enclosed outdoor play space. The pre-school serves the local area.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to care for 24 children from three to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are currently 23 children on roll. All children attending currently receive funding for Nursery Education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs 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 9am until 12 noon. Five members of staff work with the children. All have a suitable early years qualification to level three. The setting receives support from an Early Years Consultant from the Swindon Sure Start Partnership.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The cohesive, reflective and consistent team of staff are well managed by a proactive and enthusiastic manager. They provide an enabling environment for children where they are developing and progressing across all areas of learning effectively. Strong partnerships are developed with other agencies with means that children's specific needs are successfully promoted. Overall, effective systems are in place for the successful management of the setting. The setting has a good capacity to maintain and drive continuous improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop a robust knowledge of the procedures to be carried out following a change in members of the committee
- increase opportunities for children to plan and reflect on their learning
- extend opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in supporting their children's learning and development both within the setting and at home

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff in the pre-school are well organised and take effective steps to ensure that children's safety is well supported. Risk assessments are regularly carried out and action is taken to manage or eliminate risk. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Clearance procedures are in place for committee members to ensure they are suitable for their role; however knowledge about the procedures is not robust, which means that they are not always followed through in a timely manner. The pre-school staff use self-evaluation to help them validate their good practice and to identify priorities in the drive towards further improvement. This results in practice being carefully reviewed, developed and supported by regular professional training to which staff demonstrate considerable commitment. The qualifications held by them and the many courses attended provide a skilled workforce, making significant contribution to children's good progress at the pre-school. Clear links are established between planning and assessment ensuring that the next steps of learning are identified for individual children, whatever their ability or background, ensuring that the needs of all children are met. Staff are well qualified and deployed effectively with good adult to child ratios to ensure children receive a good level of support throughout the session. Staff are clear about their role within the setting and moral is high. It is clear that the staff enjoy their work and take pride in improving the outcomes for children. While these are consistently good, however, none are of an exceptionally high quality, showing that work remains to be done on driving improvement.

The pre-school is well-organised with a wide range of learning activities and resources which are deployed where they are best suited for safety, space and accessibility for all children. A free flow system enables children to access both the indoor and outdoor space as they choose. The playroom is bright and welcoming to children with activities set out attractively at the start of the session. The provision outdoors is less well developed and has been rightly recognized by the manager as being an area for future development. This means that children who learn better when outside are not so well catered for, although they still make good progress overall.

The pre-school is highly committed to working in partnership with others. A Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is in post who takes a lead in driving the provision for children. There are well-established channels of communication between local schools and services which support children with additional needs. The pre-school welcomes other professionals into the setting to support children and staff also visit other settings and attend meetings to support the children as required. Partnerships with parents are positive and relationships are well established. Staff talk regularly with parents to establish children's interests and stage of development. An informative notice-board and regular newsletters provide some opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in their children's development. Parents are invited to formal development meetings and informal discussions take place regularly. A small number of parents form the management committee.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Most children arrive cheerfully and quickly settle to group time. Those who are more reluctant to enter the pre-school are greeted by their key person and gently helped to feel secure. The group time provides a helpful opportunity for staff to talk with children about the activities for the session. They discuss the date and the day's weather, learn the names of the days of the week and count how many children are present. However, not all children arrive promptly at the start of the session which means that those already settled are disturbed and those arriving later miss some of these opportunities.

Staff use their good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework to support children's learning and development. Regular observations and assessments are recorded and shared between staff to ensure that each child is offered an enjoyable and challenging experience. Activities are planned weekly with children's individual development in mind. High quality staff interactions develop children's play and encourage them to think though opportunities for children to plan and reflect on their learning are not yet part of everyday practice.

Children assemble some crates to make a train. Staff support children by developing their play to consider which stations they are going to call at on their way to their final destination. Staff sell tickets to the children and this role is taken over by the children who then develop they play by co-operating with one another. Staff talk regularly with parents to establish children's interests and stage of development. Children carefully pour water between containers and are keen to water the plants, knowing that they need water to stay alive. Staff talk to the children about which plants need the most water and share stories of how they dug their garden and found potatoes. This links to the current interest on dinosaurs and children learn new words, such as 'palaeontologist' and they consider the different teeth in a skull. Children persist for some time, constructing a model, carefully considering where to place their brick. They make marks on the chalk board and develop pencil control as they learn to form the letters of their name. Letter recognition is supported as children self-register in the morning and find their name at snack time.

Children are confident and show good levels of self-esteem. They develop positive relationships with both adults and their peers. Children's behaviour is seen to be very good and children are beginning to show a good awareness of responsibility within the setting. Children willingly take it in turns to assist in the preparation of snack time. They count the cups and plates needed for each table and sometimes assist with the cutting of fruit and spreading of crackers. Children also help in clearing spilt water. This means children start to develop good skills for the future. Snack time is a sociable occasion. Children know to wash their hands and ask for help if needed. Staff sit with the children helping to pass the plates of food and

supporting the youngest children as they learn to pour their drink. Children make decisions about what they would like to drink and eat at these times. Healthy lifestyles are further promoted as children have free access to the covered outdoor play area where they enjoy pedalling the tricycles. Occasional outings are made to local parks.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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