



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY225164

DfES Number: 546187

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 20/05/2004  
Inspector Name Christina Downey

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care  
Setting Name St Albans Children's Centre (Early Excellence Centre)  
Setting Address Community Health Offices, Church Crescent  
St. Albans  
Hertfordshire  
AL3 5JB

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Hertfordshire County Council

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Hertfordshire County Council  
Address County Hall  
Pegs Lane  
Hertford  
Hertfordshire  
SG13 8DE

## 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

St Albans Children's Centre is located in the centre of the city of St Albans. Children's Centres aim to develop and promote models of high quality integrated services for young children and their families and are individually tailored to the needs of their local community. As well as integrated nursery education and day care provision St Albans Children's Centre provides access to: Children's Physiotherapy, Clinical Psychology, Children's Orthoptic Service, Children's Occupational Therapy, Children's Speech and Language Therapy, RNIB Inclusion Officer, a childminding coordinator, a specialist health visitor and an opportunity class.

Day care at the centre is offered from 07:45 to 18:15 each weekday for 50 weeks of the year. There are 97 children from the local community on roll at present and 25% of places are allocated to children with special needs. There are 18 day care staff in total, most of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. Older children also spend time with the nursery school team. The day care accommodation consists of three main rooms, to which children are allocated on an age basis, a large garden and an extensive outdoor play area.

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

The nursery at St Albans Children's Centre is effective. The strong ethos, good teaching and stimulating curriculum contribute significantly to children's very good progress.

The quality of teaching is very good. A rich and varied curriculum takes good account of children's varied abilities. Activities are presented imaginatively. Children with special educational needs also achieve very well. Well-established daily routines and consistently high expectations ensure that children learn to do things for themselves. Resources are organised effectively. Staff are good at checking what children have learnt and use this information effectively to plan what they should learn next.

Staff work closely with parents and give them a good range of information. The partnership with parents and carers is very good. They have plenty of opportunity to discuss how well their child is progressing and take part in the termly meetings where targets are set.

Strong leadership has formed a cohesive unit which works together effectively to provide a good quality and coherent learning experience for children. Management is also very good. Systems have been adapted to accommodate the new multi-disciplinary working practices. Professional development is good.

### What is being done well?

- Teaching for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good.
- The rich and varied curriculum takes account of children's abilities.
- The partnership with parents and carers is very effective.
- Leadership and management have a strong commitment to ensuring a high quality nursery provision.

### What needs to be improved?

- communication between the head of the nursery and the partnership manager so that joint projects can be developed more effectively

### What has improved since the last inspection?

n/a

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress and achieve well. They grow in confidence and independence and this help them make progress in all areas of learning. Their behaviour is very good and they build strong relationships.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children's speaking and listening skills are developed very well. They have a very good awareness of sounds and more able children use this knowledge in writing their names and simple words. Children enjoy books and listen to a wide range of stimulating stories.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children develop a very good knowledge of shapes and spatial awareness. Their mathematical thinking is extended through everyday routines and small group calculation work successfully extends their thinking skills.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children use the outdoor area most successfully to investigate and explore. They hunt for worms, use a walkie-talkie and tape recorder independently. They look at a wasps nest. They use a wide range of tools in their construction and develop a sound knowledge of their home town as they visit different localities.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children take part in a very wide range of interesting and challenging physical activities. They use the large fixed climbing frame skilfully and are adventurous in their range of movements they handle small pieces of equipment and show good coordination.

### CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children use their own ideas imaginatively, working on their own with stimulating materials which they combine in different ways. They take part in lively music and story sessions and act out their own stories.

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

### **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

### **WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT**

*There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:*

- Strengthen the communication between the head of the nursery and the partnership manager so that joint projects can be developed more effectively.

*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.*