



Office for Standards  
in Education

## NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 203962

DfES Number: 542227

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	01/02/2005
Inspector Name	Susan Elizabeth Warren

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Squirrels Pre School
Setting Address	St Johns & Highwood Community Centre Highwoods Colchester Essex CO4 9SR

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of St John's & Highwoods Community Association 1058410
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### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	St John's & Highwoods Community Association
Address	St Johns & Highwoods Community Centre Highwoods Square Highwoods, Colchester Essex CO4 9SR

## 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

Squirrels Pre-school opened in 1999. It operates from the Highwood's Community Centre, in Colchester, Essex. The pre-school serves the local community.

A maximum of 26 children may attend at any time. There are currently 51 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 45 children in receipt of government funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have special needs and who have English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during term times. Sessions are from 09:30 to 12:00 noon, four mornings a week and two afternoon sessions from 13:00 to 15:30 on Monday and 12:15 to 14:45 on Wednesday.

Seven part time staff and one full time staff work with the children. Three staff are currently on training programmes. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA)

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

### How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Squirrels Pre School is good. It enables children to make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional and creative development, and generally good progress in all other areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a generally good understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan and deliver a broad and balanced curriculum to help children make progress towards the early learning goals. The sessions are well planned and include free play as well as structured times. Staff are well deployed and give children a high level of support whilst allowing them to make choices and work independently.

Children with English as an additional language make good progress and join in with all activities. Children's behaviour is good in response to staff's consistent management and realistic expectations; praise and encouragement are freely given. Staff make careful and detailed observations and record the children's progress but currently these records are not linked directly to the stepping stones. Very good use is made of all parts of the premises, including the outdoor area, which is used daily.

Leadership and management is generally good. The senior staff and committee work closely together to provide a high level of support for all staff. During sessions the staff are well deployed and have clear areas of responsibility, making an effective team. Appraisal is used to identify professional development needs and staff are encouraged to update their skills and knowledge via training.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents support all aspects of the setting by serving on the committee and many choose to help on a rota basis at sessions. They are kept very well informed by newsletters, a noticeboard and a daily informal chat with staff. They are encouraged to be involved with their child's progress by the home link books.

### What is being done well?

- Children have very good opportunities to develop independence as they choose freely during the first half of the session. They are fully involved at snacktime, pouring the drinks, serving the food and clearing away.
- Within the programme for creative development opportunities for imaginative play are very good. The role play area is themed and resourced to encourage children to develop and sustain imaginative play scenarios. They enjoy going to the vets, a shop, hospital etc.
- The sessions are well organised and a general hum of purposeful activity prevails. Children can choose from a wide range of activities and the high staff ratio ensures plenty of 1:1 attention. The key worker system works very

well; staff know the children and their individual styles of learning.

**What needs to be improved?**

- resources within the programme for knowledge and understanding of the world.

**What has improved since the last inspection?**

Improvement since the last inspection is generally good.

A key worker system is now in place and staff make careful and detailed observations of children's achievements and progress. These are used to help plan the next stages of learning for individual children.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy both self chosen and teacher directed activities and concentrate well for long periods. They develop self esteem as they help at snacktime; they are proud of their accomplishments. Children are co-operative, learning to share and able to take turns with equipment. They are taught right from wrong and to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Children celebrate a variety of festivals and cultural events, both traditional and from around the world.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children listen and respond enthusiastically to stories and answer the register appropriately. They talk about real and imaginary events as they play and work. Children are introduced to letter sounds through the letter of the week. They enjoy rhyming activities and songs. The book corner is well presented with a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children can write for different purposes such as in the role play area. They have 1:1 help in recognising and forming the letters of their name.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children learn to recognise, order and name numerals. They use a fishing game to match numbers. They count and clap the children present each day. Calculation skills are introduced as children give out cups at snacktime. They can say what comes after a given number. They make a graph of garden birds seen. Children become familiar with shapes as they play with construction kits and maths equipment. They use money in the role play area and learn about capacity and volume with sand and water.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children explore and investigate in the outside area. They feed the wild birds. They grow plants and dig in the garden. Children design and build using construction kits and found materials. Children have a range of play technology in the role play area such as a phone, till, iron etc but overall, IT skills are not fully developed. They develop a sense of the local community as they visit shops, post office etc. Visitors to the group include a policeman, a vet and a librarian.

<b>PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children develop large movement skills as they use the climbing frame and balance beam. They use bikes and buggies etc in the outside area. They can line up or find a chair or a space on the carpet. Children develop awareness of body parts as they join in with stretching and moving to action songs. Fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination are developed through use of mark making equipment, dough tools, construction kits, puzzles and manipulative toys.	

<b>CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children explore colour and texture through free and guided art and craft activities, both solo and group projects. They learn to mix colours. They enjoy circle games and music and movement sessions, sometimes using instruments. Children enjoy dressing up and using the range of props provided for role play. Small world play with animals, vehicles etc encourages imaginative play. A sensory area in the garden includes windchimes and a bird table. Children enjoy playing with fallen leaves.	

<b>Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.</b>
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### **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally 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: THE KEY ISSUES**

- review and expand the range of resources available to children within the programme for knowledge and understanding of the world, particularly in relation to IT skills.

*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.*