

BuildingFutures
AWARDS
2011

- Award Category:** Design Excellence
- Project:** Breakspear Children's Centre, Abbots Langley
- Client:** Hertfordshire County Council
- Project Team:** Mace Ltd



This large open plan pre-school has been designed to encourage individual and group play, as well as to encourage child development. It offers a large central play area, with an additional south-facing outdoor play area to maximise the opportunities for inside and outside play. The design maximises the use of natural daylight and natural ventilation via slanting roof lights to the main play area and high level glazing around the perimeter of the building.

The building's support rooms offer a secure controlled environment, with the provision of a wet area, dedicated WC facilities including a baby changing area, a reception, a kitchen and storage area.

With its bright monocouche-rendered walls, bold articulated slot windows at low level (suited to a child's height) and its seemingly floating roof, the building provides a strong architectural statement.

With the help of Stuart McCurry & Partners Ltd, the development also utilises renewable energy sources. The use of an air source heat pump offers an effective and energy efficient solution to providing underfloor heating in the building – this provides warmth without the need for hot surfaces in the children's play area.

Presence detectors and low energy lighting has been used throughout the building, providing additional energy saving measures. For compliance with Part L2 Building Regulations, all power is sub-metered at distribution boards.

As a result of its design and construction, the Breakspear Children's Centre is expected to

achieve a 20% improvement on target carbon emissions.

Judges comments:

“The judges were particularly impressed with the use of space which ensures that opportunities for child development are maximised both inside and outside of the building. Also, the use of air source heat pumps for the underfloor heating demonstrates that the architects have really understood their brief and designed something which is energy efficient and, most importantly, safe for children.”
