



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

HILDEN OAKS SCHOOL & NURSERY

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Hilden Oaks School & Nursery

Full Name of School	Hilden Oaks School & Nursery		
DfE Number	886/6032		
EYFS Number	EY360192		
Registered Charity Number	307935		
Address	Hilden Oaks School & Nursery 38 Dry Hill Park Road Tonbridge Kent TN10 3BU		
Telephone Number	01732 353941		
Fax Number	01732 353942		
Email Address	secretary@hildenoaks.co.uk		
Head	Mrs Susan Webb		
Chair of Governors	Mr Derick Walker		
Age Range	3 months to 11 years		
Total Number of Pupils	216		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (77 boys; 139 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	45	5-11: 104
	3-5 (EYFS):	67	11-18:
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Gill Palmer		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	18 Nov 2014 to 19 Nov 2014		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing on the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspection occurs over a period of two continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2011.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted informal discussions with children and examined samples of work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Chris Manville Early Years Lead Inspector

Mrs Cheryl Macnair Team Inspector for Early Years (Headmistress, ISA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Hilden Oaks School and Nursery aims to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life by providing opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve. These aims are based on an approach that stresses continuity, balance, recognition of the individual and the importance of skills, concepts, attitudes and values.
- 1.2 Hilden Oaks School was established in 1919, as a day school for girls and boys. The school became a trust in 1965 when it moved to its present site, the main building of which was the boyhood home of EM Forster. Since that time the school has been extended through the acquisition of surrounding land and development of new buildings. In 2010 the school became co-educational and now caters for boys and girls from three months to the age of eleven. The school is run by a board of trustees, made up of local people from business and education, a number of whom are former parents of pupils.
- 1.3 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides care and education for children in four Nursery classes and one Reception class. Since the previous inspection, classrooms have been reorganised to encourage greater integration between age groups, and to allow direct access to outside areas for all children. An outbuilding adjacent to the Reception class has been adapted to provide additional space for messy play, art, craft and role-play activities.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, 216 pupils were on roll, of whom 112 were in the EYFS. Children in the Nursery may attend full or part-time. Four children in the EYFS have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, though none has a statement of special educational need. There are currently no children in the EYFS with English as an additional language.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the EYFS and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery (3 months to 18 months of age)
Kindie	Nursery (18 months to 2 years of age)
Kindergarten	Nursery (2 to 3 years of age)
Transition	Nursery (3 to 4 years of age)
Reception	Reception(4 to 5 years of age)

2. SUMMARY

(i) Compliance with statutory requirements

- 2.1 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Extend the programme of staff supervision to ensure that all staff have regular, scheduled coaching sessions to improve their personal effectiveness in their contact with families.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

3.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

- 3.1 The setting makes outstanding provision to meet the needs of the range of children who attend. A well-planned curriculum, incorporating an appropriate balance of adult-initiated and child-directed activities, provides many opportunities across the seven areas of learning so that all children attain levels of development typical for their age. Under-threes make rapid progress in their social, emotional, physical and language development due to the sensitive care they receive, and an environment that stimulates purposeful play. Excellent use is made of outdoor learning in richly resourced environments that promote imagination, creativity and physical development.
- 3.2 Carefully targeted support and challenge, provided by well-qualified, knowledgeable staff, meet the needs of all children, including those with additional needs, preparing them extremely well for the next stage of learning. Teachers motivate children of all ages through well-timed interventions and the effective use of questioning to promote critical thinking and problem solving. Insightful observations, recorded digitally and regularly shared with parents, provide a detailed record of children's progress and inform planning that accurately reflects children's needs and interests.
- 3.3 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in conversation with inspectors parents indicated that they were happy with all aspects of the provision, particularly with regard to how well children are looked after and how happy they are at school. Information provided for prospective and current parents, through informal coffee mornings, information evenings, weekly newsletters and detailed reports on children's progress, is excellent. Furthermore, the flexible approach to settling new children demonstrates a true commitment to partnership with parents.

3.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being

- 3.4 The setting makes an outstanding contribution to children's well-being. A very strong system of primary and additional key people, known as 'buddies', forms the basis of excellent partnership with parents and secure emotional attachments with children. Very sensitive and individualised care for infants and older children alike recognises children's emotional needs and helps children to feel safe, secure and happy within the setting. For example, a practitioner comforted a child who was missing her mother by reading a carefully chosen book about a baby owl in the same situation.
- 3.5 Practitioners know the children extremely well and take great care to adapt provision to their individual needs. Children are encouraged to work collaboratively, and stimulating, open-ended resources, such as a mud kitchen, encourage imaginative play and creative expression. High priority is given to promoting 'good old fashioned manners', an understanding of the importance of physical activity and personal hygiene and a positive attitude to a healthy lifestyle through role modelling by adults, gentle reminders and an emphasis on independence from an early age. For example, children serve vegetables and pour drinks at lunchtime.

- 3.6 Free flow between rooms supports gradual transitions, with close working relationships between staff ensuring children are very well prepared emotionally as they move to the next stage of their learning. Children in the EYFS mix readily with older children, for example, Year 6 pupils join them to perform the annual Nativity play, creating a caring, family atmosphere throughout the school.

3.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision

- 3.7 Leadership and management in the EYFS are outstanding. Governance is very strong and effective. All safeguarding requirements, including those for recruitment, are rigorously fulfilled and are well understood by staff due to comprehensive induction and ongoing training programme. A balanced approach to risk assessment creates a safe yet challenging environment. Senior managers ensure the provision of plentiful, high-quality resources, including well-trained staff, to meet the needs of all children. Careful monitoring of classroom practice and analysis of attainment data measure the impact of the educational programmes and provision overall and identify areas for development. As a result, the school is very well placed to maintain, and further improve, the already high standards.
- 3.8 Regular appraisal is effective in identifying training needs and senior managers are proactive in promoting continuous professional development and introducing new initiatives that impact positively on children's development. Staff are well supported in their roles through informal mentoring and guidance, but do not currently have access to a structured coaching programme to develop their personal effectiveness in their contact with children and families.
- 3.9 Highly productive, and effective, links with parents and other professionals result in excellent support for children with additional needs.

3.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision

- 3.10 The overall quality and standards of the EYFS provision are outstanding. Children, including those with additional needs, progress well throughout their time in the EYFS, reaching and often exceeding the expected levels of development by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- 3.11 In the Nursery, infants make rapid progress from their starting points in physical, language and social/emotional development due to the individual attention they receive from caring, engaged practitioners, to whom they show great affection. They enjoy making marks and patterns with frozen paint, and older children negotiate obstacles in the garden with increasing skill. They become confident communicators, happily sharing their activities and experiences with familiar adults. Children over the age of three engage in co-operative, imaginative role play as they create shared story narratives outside. A child was extremely articulate and expressive as he shared a previous play experience of flying in a space rocket.
- 3.12 Under-threes explore and experiment with enthusiasm as they engage in sensory play with natural materials, or investigate the flow of water as they empty jugs into funnels. Older children use mathematical knowledge as they count down how many blueberries they have left at snack time. In Reception, children begin to use mathematical language to describe and compare paper chains made for a class party, counting confidently to 20 and identifying one more or one less than a given number. They form numbers correctly, as they measure and record the length of classroom equipment using interlocking cubes. Children make good progress in

literacy, reading and writing simple and familiar words, and enjoying the opportunity to create their own storybooks.

- 3.13 Children are extremely motivated to learn, hurrying in happily in the morning and quickly becoming engrossed in activities. Their behaviour is exemplary and they have a mature understanding of sharing, co-operation and consideration. Independence is encouraged from a young age and, as a result, children are very confident in having a go.
- 3.14 Consideration for children's welfare and well-being is paramount, and robust procedures are implemented rigorously to ensure the safeguarding of children. As a result, they develop well in a safe and secure environment.
- 3.15 Since the previous inspection, information and communication technology provision has been extended, particularly for assessment, and increasingly as a learning and teaching tool. The very strong culture of self-evaluation underpins the work of the setting and as a result the school is very well placed to continue building on the already high standards.