

Hilden Oaks Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY360192
Inspection date	10 June 2008
Inspector	Stephanie Graves
Setting Address	Hilden Oaks School, 38 Dry Hill Park Road, TONBRIDGE, Kent, TN10 3BU
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Registered person	Hilden Oaks School Educational Trust Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hilden Oaks is a long established independent school, founded in 1919, in Tonbridge, Kent. The early years provision has been available for a number of years and the nursery for babies opened in 2007. The setting operates from four main rooms and two classrooms. A maximum of 50 children may attend at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 08.30 to 17.30 during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and also have access to the school field, IT room, library and other facilities.

There are currently 85 children under eight years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs twelve members of staff. Of these, eleven hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play an active role in learning about health and hygiene issues. For example, where possible they are encouraged to visit the toilet independently and follow simple written instructions and illustrations which help them to remember to wash and dry their hands properly. Staff follow clear hygiene procedures, such as cleaning surfaces with designated cloths and antibacterial spray. They ensure gloves and aprons are worn for nappy changes and when serving food. Babies and very young children have their own bed linen. These procedures all help to reduce the risk of cross-infection. Accident and medication records are in place along with written parental consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. Children with contagious ailments do not attend, helping to avoid the spread of infectious conditions. Children have opportunities to be active and also to rest in comfortable surroundings. Babies and the younger children are encouraged to follow good sleep and rest routines and staff spend quality one-to-one quiet time with them, which helps to promote their sense of well-being.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles through the nursery education curriculum. For example, they have many opportunities to exercise, use large play apparatus and take part in music and movement activities. This helps to develop their balance, strength and coordination and enhances their understanding about the effect that exercise has on their bodies. Many opportunities to develop smaller muscle control are available to all children. For example, they can access mark making experiences, construction and threading activities, as well as manipulating malleable materials and taking part in finger rhymes and songs. Older children in reception enjoy learning new skills, for example, as they learn to pass a ball to one another in different ways within small teams. Staff encourage them to stretch, bend, hop and balance, which helps them to warm up before physical activity.

The food that children eat is balanced and nutritious and drinks are available at all times. Snacks of fruit are provided from home and main meals cooked on the premises are well prepared, attractively presented and offer good choice and variety. Fresh produce is used daily and a range of meat, fish and vegetarian options are available. This helps to provide children with a healthy diet. Clear agreements are in place with parents to ensure children's dietary needs are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for within safe and secure boundaries. For example, the door leading to the stairs from the kindergarten is alarmed and the school grounds are enclosed. Staff are vigilant and carry out frequent head counts on the children throughout the day. This helps to ensure they are well supervised and accounted for at all times. A risk assessment is in place and daily checks help to reduce the risk of accidental injury to children. Potentially hazardous materials, such as antibacterial spray, are made inaccessible to children and regular fire checks help to ensure the equipment and procedures in place are effective. Children learn how to help keep themselves and others safe through good staff input. For example, during a carpet activity that involves a member of staff cutting up water melon, children know that the knife is 'sharp' and they must sit still during the process. They practise the emergency evacuation procedure regularly, which helps them to develop a sense of responsibility and personal safety.

Children's welfare and safety is considered well by staff who have an up-to-date knowledge of the required procedures to safeguard them at all times. They understand the signs and symptoms of abuse, know what to do in the event of a concern and can access all relevant information easily. Training updates have been attended and all staff are made aware of their duty towards the children in their care. This helps to ensure that children's welfare remains the priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children arrive confidently, settle quickly and are consistently involved and engaged. They demonstrate excellent relationships with staff who know them well and provide an extensive range of experiences that cover all areas of learning. Toys and resources are easily accessible and children's creations are celebrated and displayed within each room. Children, including those attending the after school clubs can access a wide range of activities and opportunities. Ongoing, free flow play opportunities between indoor and outdoor areas significantly enhance children's enjoyment and learning potential. Staff understand how children learn and progress and ensure opportunities reflect their individual needs. Babies and the very young children enjoy the company of staff who are warm and attentive, play at their level and communicate with them warmly. They are extremely comfortable and at ease, for instance, as they snuggle in with a member of staff to look at a book or interact with ease at mealtimes. They enjoy painting activities, outings around the school grounds, exploring interactive toys and books and the contents of treasure baskets. Much information is gathered about babies and children at the time of entry, and planning, observation and assessment are used very effectively to demonstrate progress.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are progressing extremely well through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Their achievements are excellent in relation to their initial starting points and abilities. This is because the staff working with them implement the principles of the Foundation Stage effectively and provide a very broad and balanced curriculum. They observe and assess children's learning from when they join the setting, through to reception. Individual files show clear progression from the start. Planning is very well documented and differentiated to ensure the needs of all children are addressed equally. The next steps in children's learning build on what they already know and inform future planning for each child. Regular evaluations monitor the effectiveness of the play and learning opportunities provided.

Children are confident, extremely friendly and play well together. They are becoming independent learners as they make choices and staff are highly competent at engaging children in the activities provided. They maintain their interest through innovative teaching methods, ask very effective questions and encourage children to persist and complete tasks. This challenges and extends children's existing abilities. A wide variety of resources and mark making tools are readily available to encourage children to make marks on a range of surfaces. Many can write their names using correctly formed letters and enjoy recreating simple words found in books. They learn to link sounds and letters during meaningful activities. For example, children in reception learn to recognise, form and sound out simple words by experimenting with short vowel sounds. The activities provided are suited to children's different ages and stages of development.

Children thoroughly enjoy stories, enjoy contributing to storylines and can access a wide range of different books within the classrooms and an extensive range in the school library. Many of these carry information and help children to make connections with activities and themes, such as planting and growing. Very effective environmental print helps to reinforce children's early reading skills. All children have access to a wide variety of mathematical resources, both indoors and out. They are confident with numbers, counting and shape recognition and have frequent opportunities to match, sequence and sort. They learn about capacity, for instance, through water play as they fill and empty containers. Children learn to solve problems and explore the concept of size. For example, staff use language, such as, 'bigger' and 'smaller' as they cut up fruit and encourage them to work out how many pieces are needed. Children in reception work out who has been asked to stand on a red or a yellow line to form teams during physical activity. They also have access to a wide range of resources that help to develop their early numeracy skills.

Children have many opportunities to investigate using their senses. For example, they touch, taste and smell different foods and blow through straws to make bubbles in coloured water. They explore the natural environment and resources, learn about living things, including insects and bugs, and also learn about things that grow through planting beans, seeds and flowers. Children can access construction and small world play activities. They have frequent access to computers and programmable toys that help develop their early understanding of information and communication technology.

Extensive use of the outdoor area, in all weathers, promotes children's physical skills effectively. Children are very creative and quickly become excited by music and movement activities and eagerly take part in singing familiar songs in different languages. They enjoy role play and can access a very good selection of resources, which encourages them to make connections and recreate real life experiences through their play. Overall, the provision plans and provides an outstanding range of activities, play opportunities and learning experiences that promote children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and treated according to their individual needs. Babies are regularly acknowledged and affirmed, helping them to feel settled and secure. Staff are caring and greet children warmly, which helps them to develop a strong sense of belonging. Children learn about the differences between themselves and others in society through toys, resources and experiences that promote positive images of diversity. They are polite and respectful, because effective behaviour management strategies promote their good behaviour. They understand the 'golden rules' that apply and are gently reminded of these regularly. Staff are good role models who encourage good manners and sensitively teach children right from wrong. They regularly praise them for their achievements and good behaviour, which promotes children's welfare and self-esteem.

Children benefit from an effective partnership with parents, because staff and parents work together to meet their needs. A good range of information is shared and parents know they can speak to staff at any time. They believe staff provide very well for their children and feel included and involved. The setting does not currently provide regular feedback on what children have been doing on a day-to-day basis, although this is being addressed to help achieve consistent support for children. The provider takes positive steps to ensure that parents are kept well informed about relevant policies and procedures, which are currently being updated.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents of children receiving funding for nursery education receive good quality information about the curriculum and have regular opportunities to share their children's individual progress records. The planning is clearly displayed and parents know they are welcome to visit the setting to share their own knowledge and skills with the children. This helps to reinforce children's enjoyment and learning potential.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are highly involved and play cooperatively together. They talk about their favourite activities and become excited by experiences, such as observing lobster frozen in ice. Children's social and communication skills are developing well. They are friendly and kind to others and share and take turns as they play. They have regular opportunities to discuss their favourite ideas and interests, which helps them to feel that their contributions matter.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for within a warm, welcoming and well organised environment. They are settled and secure and demonstrate very good, warm relationships with staff. They have free access to an extensive range of play and learning experiences and are well supervised at all times. Effective systems are in place to ensure the adults working with children are suitable. Regular monitoring of staff performance is undertaken and any training needs are updated as necessary. Daily attendance records are in place and any visitors to the provision are monitored and their details recorded. The registration certificate is displayed along with a range of other information for parents. The policies and procedures underpin the group's professional practice and help to promote children's welfare, care and learning.

The leadership and management are good. Staff apply the Foundation Stage extremely well and there are clear aims in place for the development of all the children. Although some improvement is required concerning the partnership with parents, staff work hard to maintain effective links. Children are observed and assessed effectively and, as a result, rapid progress is evident. Planning includes all areas of the curriculum equally. Staff are dedicated to the children's needs and integrate care and nursery education well. The provision of toys, equipment and resources is excellent and because these are appealing, children remain interested and focused. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated continuously, to ensure outcomes for children are successful.

The provider is committed towards the ongoing improvement of the provision. This is evident in regular self-evaluation exercises and reflective practice, resulting in a professional service. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of nursery education, there were no significant weaknesses to report. The provider was left with one point for consideration, to ensure that activities are evaluated. The provider has taken positive steps towards improving this area of practice so that children can be provided with meaningful play and learning experiences.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to provide parents with regular feedback about the daily activities (also applies to nursery education).

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- make improvements as indicated in the care section above.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk