



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Progress Monitoring Inspection Report

Hilden Oaks Preparatory School and Nursery

March 2023

School's details

School	Hilden Oaks Preparatory School and Nursery		
DfE number	886/6032		
Early Years registration number	EY360192		
Registered charity number	307935		
Address	Hilden Oaks Preparatory School and Nursery 38 Dry Hill Park Road Tonbridge Kent TN10 3BU		
Telephone number	01732 353941		
Email address	secretary@hildenoaks.co.uk		
Headmistress	Mrs Katy Joiner		
Chair of governors	Mr Derick Walker		
Proprietor	Hilden Oaks Educational Trust Ltd		
Age range	3 months to 11 years		
Number of pupils on roll	168		
	EYFS	46	Pre-prep 49
	Prep	73	
Date of inspection	23 March 2023		

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Hilden Oaks Preparatory School and Nursery was established in 1919 as a co-educational day school. It moved to its present location in 1965 and since 2007 has catered for pupils from three months within a registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting. The pre-prep educates pupils in Years 1 and 2 and the prep, pupils in Years 3 to 6. A board of trustees is responsible for the school's governance. The school has 23 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has an education, health and care plan. Thirteen pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's previous inspection was a regulatory compliance inspection in September 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the regulatory compliance inspection on 14 to 15 September 2022. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and the proprietor)	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7; EYFS 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding that provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils are implemented effectively, including those relating to the Prevent duty. The school ensures a culture of listening to pupils and of respect for others. Pupils confirm that they have a variety of people to whom they can turn for support if they have a concern. Pupils receive a response when they express concerns in school, and appropriate action is taken where necessary. This was confirmed during interviews with pupils and staff and by records of safeguarding. Pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe, including when online.
- 2.5 All staff, including those in positions of responsibility for safeguarding, are suitably trained in line with locally agreed procedures. There is a designated safeguarding lead for the EYFS. Interviews with leaders and staff from all parts of the school, confirm they fully understand their respective roles in safeguarding. In particular, all staff understand different types of abuse including child-on-child abuse and sexual harassment. They understand the particular vulnerability of those pupils with SEND. Staff are ready to identify, report and investigate potential abuse. Records show that staff report any safeguarding concerns to the appropriate person in a timely fashion. Senior leaders communicate concerns to relevant outside agencies effectively. They take prompt action where concerns are raised, or incidents occur.
- 2.6 The safeguarding policy contains suitable guidance about reporting low-level concerns about adults working in the school. This guidance is understood by staff and concerns are shared with senior leaders appropriately when they arise. Safeguarding is effectively managed. There is an appropriate staff code of conduct and suitable arrangements for whistleblowing. Interviews with staff confirmed suitable understanding of these and willingness to act appropriately should the need arise. Suitable arrangements to handle allegations against adults working with pupils are in place.
- 2.7 There is a suitable safer recruitment process. This is now implemented effectively in practice to ensure that the required recruitment checks are completed before staff commence work. This includes checks of the lists of those prohibited from teaching and/or management.
- 2.8 The proprietors maintain appropriate oversight of safeguarding procedures, completing sufficiently regular reviews of safeguarding policy and practice effectively. They oversee effective recruitment checks of staff and other adults working with children and are appropriately trained in safeguarding.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; EYFS 3.9 – 3.12]

- 2.9 The school meets the standards.

- 2.10 The school ensures that all the required recruitment checks for staff and supply staff are now completed before a person commences work at the school. This includes ensuring overseas checks are completed if required. The proprietors are appropriately checked.
- 2.11 The school maintains an accurate register of recruitment checks which now specifies all the relevant information relating to recruitment, including the dates of Disclosure and Barring Service checks, checks of identity and checks on those who have lived overseas.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.12 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.13 The school meets the standard.
- 2.14 The proprietors ensure that senior leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that all the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. The action plan required following the previous inspection has been implemented effectively.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this inspection, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with a governor. She and talked with groups of pupils. She scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mrs Vivien Sergeant

Reporting inspector