ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

Ofsted registered early years setting inspection report

19 to 20 May 2026

Hazelwood School Nursery

(Hazelwood School)

19 Bluehouse Lane

Oxted

RH8 0AA

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is commissioned by Ofsted to inspect registered early years settings in independent schools in England which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council. Ofsted is the regulator for early years registered settings in England.

Inspection outcomes

Safeguarding	Met
Inclusion	Expected standard
Curriculum and teaching	Expected standard
Achievement	Expected standard
Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines	Expected standard
Children's welfare and wellbeing	Expected standard
Leadership and governance	Expected standard

The extent to which the school meets the requirements of the early years foundation stage

The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

Summary of inspection findings

1. Children settle well into the welcoming environment and develop warm, trusting relationships with staff who know them and their families well. Children separate confidently from their parents and carers with reassurance from familiar staff, before quickly engaging in play and learning. Babies and toddlers confidently make decisions about whether to play indoors or outdoors and demonstrate that they feel safe and secure in the setting. Babies seek comfort and reassurance from nurturing staff. Older children confidently move around the environment. They independently select resources and activities that interest them as they play alongside their friends and invent their own games.

2. Children enjoy exploring the environment and engage positively in their learning experiences. Babies develop early communication skills through songs, gestures, babbling and responsive interactions from staff. Toddlers develop confidence in using simple words, gestures and signs to communicate their wants and needs. Older children enthusiastically explore sensory play, construction activities and imaginative games. Children enjoy adventurous outdoor experiences in the forest area, such as climbing and swinging. They learn about boundaries, potential hazards and how to manage risk safely. Children are often curious, motivated and eager to investigate the experiences staff provide for them.

3. Children develop increasing independence and social skills through daily routines. Older children help to prepare snacks and practise managing tasks independently, such as safely chopping their fruits and vegetables. Staff encourage younger children to tidy away books and follow simple instructions. Lunchtime is a social occasion that children enjoy with their friends and staff. Staff typically support children to develop their manners, social skills and understanding of healthy

lifestyles. Children learn to treat others kindly and begin learning how to take turns, share and play co-operatively with others.

4. Children develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for the next stage in their learning, including readiness for school. Babies and younger children develop their listening, attention and communication skills through songs, stories, repetition and responsive interactions with staff. Older children build increasing concentration and focus as they engage in imaginative play, creative activities and group experiences. Children develop their physical skills through climbing, balancing, riding wheeled toys and exploring outdoor environments. Staff provide them with opportunities such as threading, mark making and using tools safely to strengthen their hand muscles and co-ordination ready for early writing. Children begin developing the listening skills, vocabulary and confidence needed to support early phonics and future reading.

Safeguarding

5. Safeguarding is met

6. The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed.

Inclusion

7. The grading for inclusion is at the expected standard.

8. Leaders and staff create an inclusive environment where children are known well as individuals, and supported to participate alongside their peers. Staff typically understand children's interests, development and individual needs and use this knowledge to help children feel included within daily routines and play experiences. Staff adapt parts of the environment and resources appropriately to reduce barriers for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, they use visual support, and adapt resources to help children access experiences, develop communication and participate more independently in the setting.

9. Leaders reflect on how they can strengthen inclusion processes and provision. This includes increasing the number of staff with oversight responsibilities to help share workload and to further develop the understanding staff have of children's differing needs and the importance of providing appropriate support at an early stage. Overall, leaders monitor provision and support effectively for children who face barriers to their learning and wellbeing.

10. Leaders work effectively with parents and outside agencies to support children's development and generally ensure that children receive appropriate support. Suitable support is in place for children with identified needs in communication and language, and physical development. Staff make effective use of strategies, such as quieter spaces and targeted communication support, to help children regulate emotions, develop communication skills and participate alongside their peers.

11. Staff identify and respond appropriately to children who may face barriers to their learning and wellbeing. Leaders understand how to access additional funding to strengthen support and provision

for children who have SEND. However, partnership working with other settings children attend is inconsistent and does not always support continuity in children's care and learning effectively. Leaders do not ensure that targeted strategies and support are consistently embedded into children's daily routines and interactions across the setting. As a result, some approaches to supporting children's individual developmental needs are not reinforced precisely by staff in practice. Consequently, some children do not benefit from consistently implemented support to help reduce barriers to their learning and wellbeing.

Curriculum and teaching

12. The grading for curriculum and teaching is at the expected standard.

13. Leaders have designed a curriculum that reflects the requirements of the early years statutory framework and which supports children's learning well across the seven areas of learning. Leaders and staff purposefully design learning environments to provide opportunities for exploration, sensory play and open-ended experiences that encourage children to investigate and develop their curiosity. There is a clear focus on building on what children know and can do as they move through the different age-group rooms. For example, staff support babies to develop single words and communicate their needs and wishes through gestures, signs and simple language before extending children's speaking, vocabulary and sentence building as they grow older. Staff support this progression skilfully through effective modelling and interactions during play and daily routines.

14. Leaders are typically reflective and demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the strengths of the setting and areas requiring development within the curriculum and teaching. Leaders have been proactive in identifying areas where provision requires further enhancement. For example, there has been a recent focus on developing outdoor learning opportunities. This is beginning to strengthen practice and support children's learning, including their physical and emotional development more effectively.

15. Staff understand children's interests, development and individual needs and use this knowledge to support children's participation in play and learning. Leaders and staff appropriately identify children who may face barriers to their learning and wellbeing, and implement targeted strategies to support communication, language and physical development needs. Staff adapt aspects of the environment and experiences suitably to support children to participate alongside their peers. Staff use observations and assessment information to identify children's next steps and tailor some experiences to children's different starting points and stages of development.

16. Staff support children's engagement, communication and curiosity during child-led play and daily experiences through thoughtful interactions. Some staff adapt activities effectively in the moment and follow children's interests appropriately. For example, staff build on children's spontaneous interest in resources, such as sand and water play, to introduce relevant teaching and learning across different areas of the curriculum. Staff use modelling, repetition and questioning to support children's communication skills and engagement in play. Staff generally encourage children's confidence, independence and social development through routines and play experiences. Children are motivated and engaged in their learning and develop the knowledge and skills needed for the next stage of their education, including readiness for school.

17. Staff planning for the curriculum, however, does not demonstrate a precise rationale or links to children's next steps in learning. Some planned activities focus more heavily on completing activities rather than identifying precisely what staff want individual children to learn and how this relates to children's stages of development. As a result, children do not consistently benefit from highly effective teaching that precisely builds on what they already know and can do.

Achievement

18. The grading for achievement is at the expected standard.

19. Children generally make good progress from their starting points across the seven areas of learning. Communication and language develop progressively as children move through the setting. Babies begin communicating through gestures, signs, babbling and early words, and older children develop increasing confidence in speaking, listening and expressing their ideas. Children use an expanding vocabulary during play and learning experiences. For example, older children use language, such as 'tentacles', 'floating' and 'sinking', as they investigate objects and sea creatures during water play activities. Children generally develop the knowledge and skills needed for the next stage in their education, including readiness for school.

20. Children develop increasing levels of concentration, co-operation and independence appropriate for their age and stage of development. They generally listen attentively, follow instructions and apply what they know during play and daily routines. Children begin developing a love of books and stories from an early age. Babies confidently bring favourite books to adults to share together, and older children handle books carefully, recognise familiar words and engage enthusiastically in stories and discussions.

21. Children who may face barriers to their learning and wellbeing, including children who have SEND, overall make good progress from their starting points. However, inconsistencies in the implementation of the curriculum and teaching mean that children do not consistently benefit from highly effective learning experiences across all rooms. Consequently, opportunities to deepen children's learning and extend their progress are not consistently maximised across the setting.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

22. The grading for behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines is at the expected standard

23. Leaders' expectations for behaviour are typically understood by staff and children. Staff support children calmly and respectfully. Overall, they help children understand routines and expectations. Children are often co-operative, engaged and settled during play and daily routines. Staff support children to learn to take turns, share resources and play co-operatively with others. Children confidently seek reassurance, comfort and support from familiar adults. However, some strategies used by staff to support babies' understanding of expectations and interactions with others are less effective and are not always matched to children's stage of development.

24. Staff support children's confidence, independence and positive attitudes to learning appropriately. Children are encouraged to make choices, manage some tasks independently and develop increasing responsibility during daily routines. Staff use strategies, such as visual prompts, reminders and

targeted support, to help some children understand expectations and regulate their emotions appropriately. Staff consider children's individual needs and circumstances when supporting behaviour and routines, including for children who have SEND. Older children are beginning to apply these expectations independently within their play and interactions. For example, children remind their friends to take turns and share resources fairly during activities and play experiences. Staff encourage children to support their peers and help their friends remember the rules of games.

25. Leaders promote positive attendance and have effective arrangements in place to monitor children's attendance patterns and follow up concerns where necessary. Older children benefit from routines and expectations that help them develop increasing independence, readiness for learning and an understanding of punctuality and routines that support their preparation for school.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

26. The grading for children's welfare and wellbeing is at the expected standard

27. Leaders and staff promote children's welfare and wellbeing effectively. Children receive warm and nurturing care from staff who know them and their families well. Secure and responsive relationships are evident throughout the setting, particularly within the baby and toddler rooms, where children confidently seek reassurance, comfort and support from familiar adults. Staff support children's emotional wellbeing appropriately and help children feel safe, settled and secure within daily routines and experiences.

28. Staff typically support children to develop an understanding of healthy lifestyles, personal safety and physical wellbeing. Children benefit from regular opportunities for outdoor play, physical activity and fresh air, including learning how to manage risks safely within the forest area. Mealtimes are calm and sociable experiences during which staff encourage children to develop independence, good manners and an understanding of healthy food and drink choices. Staff are attentive to children's dietary and medical needs and implement procedures appropriately to help keep children safe. For example, children with allergies are supported effectively during mealtimes and children are beginning to develop an awareness of each other's individual needs. Staff generally support children to recognise and manage their emotions appropriately through reassurance, reminders and targeted strategies, such as visual prompts and quieter spaces for some children who may require additional support.

29. Leaders and staff generally support transitions appropriately to promote children's emotional security and wellbeing. Staff work closely with parents when children join the setting to gather information about children's routines, interests and individual needs so children experience a settled start. Leaders and staff generally plan transitions between rooms thoughtfully and support children to become familiar with new routines, environments and adults. For example, staff introduce routines and expectations for three-year-old children that help prepare them for the move into pre-school. This includes adapting lunchtime routines to help children develop increasing independence and familiarity with experiences similar to a dining hall environment. Staff also create transition booklets containing photographs of staff and environments to help children become familiar with upcoming changes and support them to feel secure and confident moving into their next stage of learning.

30. However, there are some inconsistencies in the implementation of the setting's policies and procedures. For example, leaders do not give full consideration to maintaining children's privacy and dignity during some personal care routines, such as the location of the tables where nappies are changed. Consequently, care practices are not implemented fully effectively by staff in all areas of the provision.

Leadership and governance

31. The grading for leadership and governance is at the expected standard.

32. Leaders are reflective and demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the setting's strengths and areas requiring further development. They have been proactive in identifying areas where provision requires enhancement, including outdoor learning opportunities, ensuring that staff understand child development and aspects of inclusive practice. Leaders have introduced training and curriculum oversight to help strengthen practice and improve outcomes for children. Some of these actions are beginning to strengthen provision.

33. Leaders generally take appropriate action to support children who may face barriers to their learning and wellbeing, including children who have SEND. Overall, leaders work with parents and outside agencies appropriately and have introduced targeted strategies to support communication, language and physical development needs. Leaders are developing the understanding staff have of early intervention and children's differing needs, through training and increased oversight.

34. Leaders monitor the quality of provision and support staff through supervision meetings, learning walks and professional development opportunities. Staff benefit from training relating to safeguarding, communication and language, SEND, and outdoor learning. Leaders are considerate of the wellbeing and workload of staff and have systems in place to support staff.

35. Leaders' monitoring and oversight are not fully established to ensure that agreed policies, procedures and expectations are embedded into staff practice. As a result, some inconsistencies in teaching, care practices and approaches to supporting children's individual needs have not been addressed quickly. This means that some children do not benefit from highly effective experiences in all aspects of the provision.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- provide the guidance and support that staff need to tailor teaching precisely to children's individual starting points, development and needs to help them to make the best possible progress
- ensure that any inconsistencies in staff practice are identified and addressed promptly so that children consistently benefit from highly effective provision across the setting
- strengthen partnership working with the other early years settings that children who attend Hazelwood Nursery also attend.

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Registered setting details

Registered setting name	Hazelwood School Nursery
Unique reference number	EY394827
Address	19 Bluehouse Lane Oxted Surrey RH8 0AA
Phone number	01883 714171
Email address	schooloffice@hazelwoodschool.com
Website	www.hazelwoodschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Hazelwood School Limited
Nominated individual	Lindie Louw
Age range of children at the time of the inspection	Nine months to four years
Total number of places	128
Number of children on roll	164
Date of previous inspection of the registered setting	21 to 23 June 2023

Information about the setting

36. Hazelwood School Nursery registered in 2009. The registered setting operates from Hazelwood School. The setting is open Monday to Friday 7.30 am to 6 pm for 50 weeks of the year.

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Inspection details

Inspection dates	19 to 20 May 2026

37. Two inspectors visited the registered setting for two half days. This inspection took place at the same time as the inspection of Hazelwood School

38. Inspection activities included:

- shared observation of learning in collaboration with setting leaders
- discussions with the school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with parents
- discussions with children
- observations of children's routines, including eating, sleeping and transition times
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the setting.

39. The inspection team considered the views of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

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