

INSPECTION REPORT

Chelwood Nursery School

Brockley, Lewisham

LEA area: Lewisham

Unique reference number: 100668

Headteacher: Mrs Jane Keefe

Reporting inspector: Mrs Lesley Robins
5848

Dates of inspection: 8 February 2000

Inspection number: 000186199

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	LEA Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chelwood Walk Turnham Road Brockley London
Postcode:	SE4 2QQ
Telephone number:	020 7639 2514
Fax number:	020 7635 8017
Appropriate authority:	Early Years Service, Lewisham
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Stella Jeffrey
Date of previous inspection:	16-19 October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chelwood Nursery School is situated in Brockley, in the London Borough of Lewisham. There are 132 children on roll, with a balanced number of boys and girls. At the time of the inspection, 48 children were attending full-time, and the rest were attending part-time. The children come from a rich mix of social and cultural backgrounds. There is a significant proportion of children, approximately 19 percent, for whom English is an additional language. The main languages, other than English, spoken by the children include French; Yoruba; Somali; Ghana; Twi; Spanish; Italian; Urhobo; Ibo; Norwegian; German; Vietnamese and Albanian. At the time of the inspection, eight children were at an early stage of English language acquisition. A relatively small proportion of children, about 12 percent, has been identified as having special educational needs. The children's attainment when they come into the nursery school is average. Within this overall average picture, however, some children have well-developed language and social skills, whilst others have poor levels of language and speech skills and limited social skills. At the time of the inspection, the children's ages ranged from three to just four years and four months.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Chelwood is a very effective nursery school, with high standards of teaching and learning that lead to high standards of attainment. It is very well led and managed. Other significant strengths of the school include very good support for the children's personal development; very successful partnership with parents and an enriching, challenging curriculum. Chelwood provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The very effective teaching is leading to very good progress by the children
- Standards are high, notably in language and literacy, and in the children's scientific and technological skills
- The children enjoy school, are enthusiastic learners, and get on extremely well with each other and with adults
- The school provides an exceptionally broad range of exciting learning experiences, including very good opportunities for the children to learn about other cultures
- Parents are very much part of the school community and are successfully involved in supporting their children's learning
- The school is very well led and managed.

What could be improved

- The written reports for governors do not include overall judgements of standards in the school to help governors know how well the school is meeting expected national standards.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Chelwood was last inspected in October 1995. That inspection found many strengths in standards and quality in the school, and these have been very successfully sustained. The 1995 report identified three key issues for action, which have been well addressed. The first, involving the playground surface, and minor health and safety matters, has been dealt with effectively. With regard to the other two key issues, there is now rigorous monitoring of progress with the school management plan, although some further improvement is needed in terms of reporting explicitly on standards. The governors have very effectively strengthened their strategic role and are in their second year of managing their own school budget. The school is in a good position to maintain its high standards and to go on improving where possible.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of pupils in relation to the national desirable learning outcomes by the time they leave the school.

Performance in:		Key
Language and literacy	A	Well above average A
Mathematics	B	Above average B
Personal and social development	A	Below average C
Other areas of the curriculum	B	Well below average D E

The national Desirable Learning Outcomes define what most children should achieve by statutory school age, that is the term after their fifth birthday. The children at Chelwood transfer to primary school one or two terms before reaching statutory school age. By the time they leave Chelwood, most of the oldest children are well on their way to achieving the standards expected for five year olds, and in some aspects have already achieved those standards. They achieve particularly well in their personal and social development, in language and literacy and in aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The children love school. They are enthusiastic and confident learners, with good concentration for their age.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour overall is very good, with the children making good progress in learning how to share. The children learn well the expected classroom routines.
Personal development and relationships	The children are concerned for each other, and relate very well to adults. They are successfully learning about the impact of their behaviour on others. They demonstrate high levels of independence and personal responsibility for their age.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The great majority of children arrive promptly for the start of school.

The children's very positive attitudes to learning, the excellent relationships they enjoy with all the adults and in particular their high levels of independence, make a significant contribution to the very good quality of their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Under – 5
Lessons seen overall	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

All of the teaching seen during the inspection was very good, with many strengths, leading to high standards of learning by the children. All the practitioners have very high expectations of the children's attainment and behaviour, shown in challenging tasks and questioning, and an emphasis on independence in learning, so that the children make very good progress. Basic skills, such as knowledge about books and print, awareness of letters, and counting are skilfully taught and reinforced through well-structured play. The very effective promotion of the skills of enquiry, investigation and exploration enables the children to develop a good range of learning skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned and enriching, with an exceptionally broad range of exciting learning experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The very effective emphasis on inclusion and equality of opportunity, together with careful tracking of individual children, ensures that those with special educational needs make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The children learning English as an additional language benefit from a good balance of opportunities to work in a fully integrated way with the other children and from times when they have focused support from the English language support teacher.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision overall for the children's personal development, with notable strengths in social development and multi-cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes good provision for the children's welfare. The children are well known to all the adults. Management of behaviour is firm, but sensitive. There is thorough and well documented tracking of individual progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher, whose clear vision maintains high standards and ensures consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, leads the school very effectively. The recently appointed deputy head teacher is working very successfully with the head teacher and the staff. The subject co-ordinators lead curriculum development well and give good support to their colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Since the last inspection, the governors have successfully strengthened their role. They have good involvement with drafting and monitoring the school management plan. They are successfully developing their work in planning and monitoring the school budget. They are very aware of, and well informed about, the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Regular meetings of the senior management and of class teams, together with a rolling programme of policy and curriculum review, linked to the school management plan, ensure that the governors and staff have a good view of the quality of teaching and learning in the school, and of aspects of its work, such as partnership with parents. However, the written reports for governors do not include explicit evaluations of overall standards of achievement in the school.
The strategic use of resources	Budget planning and management are good. Careful choices are made about staff selection. Individual roles and responsibilities are well defined and implemented and teamwork is a significant strength in the school. Effective use is made of funding and support for children learning English as an additional language.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • The school and its staff are very approachable • The school works closely with parents • The school is well managed and led • Their children make good progress • The school helps the children to become mature and responsible • The school has high expectations of the children • The children behave well at nursery school • The teaching is good • The work given to children to do at home is very helpful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very few parents said that although they know they can ask, they would like a formal opportunity to discuss their child's progress during their nursery school career as well as at the beginning and end of their child's time in nursery school.

The inspection team fully agrees with the parents' very positive views. The inspectors judge that, although overall parents are very well informed about their children's progress, the school could usefully consider introducing a formal opportunity for parents to discuss their children's progress midway during their nursery career.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The very effective teaching is leading to very good progress for the children

1. All of the teaching seen during the inspection was very good, with significant strengths and no weaknesses. The teaching is characterised by good teamwork, thorough planning, imaginative activities, high expectations and challenge, good reinforcement of basic skills, kind but firm management of behaviour, and effective ongoing assessment. The impact of this strong teaching is that the children make very good progress in knowledge and understanding, develop very positive attitudes to learning and gain a broad range of learning skills. It is noteworthy that 93 percent of parents who returned questionnaires judged that the teaching was good and 97 percent judged that their children made good progress.
2. The practitioners in each class team and the school teaching team as a whole, plan the educational programme together, with clear identification of the learning they want to promote. The different learning focus in each classroom each week is successfully followed through by all the adults. For example, the mathematical focus in one classroom meant that children were encouraged during their cooking to count carefully the number of spoonfuls needed of each ingredient. An outdoor playground game involved the children in throwing dice, counting the spots and jumping the requisite number of moves on a chalked number line. During the day, the line was extended from six to 23. Thus, the children made very good progress in their number knowledge and counting skills. In another classroom, the focus on language and literacy saw a strong emphasis on children sharing and looking at books with each other and with adults, so that they successfully applied their awareness of books and print, recounting familiar stories and approximating to the text.
3. Very imaginative provision successfully engages the children's interest, promotes curiosity, develops learning skills and extends their language. On the day of the inspection, a shallow water tray had been filled with blocks of ice in which toy animals had been frozen. The children were immediately engaged in trying to free the animals, observing the ice melting and discussing the animals, all of which are to be found in cold areas of the world, such as polar bears and penguins. Outdoors, a sand tray had been equipped with buckets and pulleys with the words "up" "down" and "pull" written nearby. The children successfully experimented with large and small loads of sand, noting how heavy the buckets were.
4. The adults extend and challenge the children's thinking through questioning and the use of technical vocabulary. In the ice play activity for example one adult asked the children whether they thought the ice would melt by apple and biscuit time or by lunchtime. In another classroom, children using a programmable toy with an adult were asked why the toy had stopped, and were introduced to phrases such as "clear the memory." The use of story props with very young children enables them to concentrate effectively and to develop well their understanding of sequence and structure.
5. Direct teaching of individuals and groups is balanced by very successful extension of learning through developing children's response when they are playing. Technological skills of using real tools, such as hammers and drills, of using the computer mouse or instructing a programmable toy are clearly taught, with strong encouragement to children to persevere, with the result that children successfully use those skills when working independently. One very young child correctly used a drill to make a hole in a block of wood and then told the adult observing that she needed to "blow the dust away". On another occasion, a young boy with special needs, showed interest in writing peoples' names. He was given a clipboard to record his list and his attempts to write were valued and encouraged. On another occasion, a boy was using a drill on furniture in the playhouse. The practitioner took the child to the construction area, where he could practise this skill in an appropriate way.
6. Minor squabbles are successfully resolved by clear intervention from adults explaining why and how equipment needs to be shared. In rare instances of unacceptable behaviour, the adults are

appropriately very firm, explaining why the behaviour will not be tolerated. Extensive time is given to tidying up time when the children are strongly, but kindly, encouraged to help each other put resources away in the correct places. Most significantly, the children are given extensive freedom to make choices of activities, to move from room to room, and select materials they need or want to use, with the expectation that they will work productively and creatively, and the children rise to these expectations. The excellent organisation and availability of resources successfully support the children's independence.

7. The practitioners have a well-established system of observing and recording significant learning demonstrated by the children during sessions. These notes are collated in individual records and used to summarise achievement each term and to identify targets for the next term. Four children are targeted each week for more detailed observation and record keeping and the head teacher monitors 12 individual records each week. This close and systematic overview of children's learning ensures that individual children make the progress they could and should. Additionally, there is daily and weekly review by each teaching team and the school team, of children's responses to what has been provided. Activities are adjusted and teaching points agreed for the next sessions or the next block of learning. This system also contributes to the very good progress that children make.

Standards are high, notably in language and literacy and in the children's scientific and technological skills.

8. For their age, the children achieve high standards in relation to the Desirable Learning Outcomes. When they leave Chelwood, they are still very young and have one or two terms to go before reaching statutory school age, but are well on their way to achieving the expected standards for five year olds. In some aspects of their learning, the children's achievements are already meeting expected standards.
9. Standards are high in all the areas of learning defined by the Desirable Learning Outcomes, and particularly so in language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world. All the parents who attended the pre-inspection meetings were clear and positive about the high standards their children achieve at Chelwood.
10. The majority of the oldest children handle books well and can recount familiar stories, understanding structure and sequence. They listen attentively to longer stories and many are articulate and confident speakers for their age. They engage confidently in role-play and will readily involve adults in their imaginary scenarios. They can identify most of the letters in their own names, and know how other peoples' names begin. High attainers write their names accurately, with just a few being aware of upper and lower case letters, and can name many of the letters of the alphabet. Some can recognise simple words such as "go". They have good understanding of the purposes of writing and tackle writing confidently, writing lists and menus, making simple books or dictating text to an adult.
11. The children develop good mathematical vocabulary, making good progress in using terms such as more than, less than, big, small, heavy and light. The oldest children mostly know the names of shapes such as circles and triangles and high attainers can name three-dimensional shapes such as cylinder and cuboid. They count accurately to at least five and most can count to 10, with high attainers counting to 20 or a little beyond. Few as yet write numbers but they do recognise them in different contexts such as on dominoes or in displays. When tidying up, the children can find the appropriately numbered trolley for storage. A few high attaining children are beginning to understand the operations of addition and subtraction in practical contexts.
12. Many children confidently use a computer mouse, knowing how to click on icons and drag them across the screen. They can select and change colour icons to make pictures. The children make good progress in learning how to give simple instructions to a programmable toy, progressing, with support, from random instructions to giving the instructions in the correct sequence. One or two older, high attaining children can choose and load a program. The children confidently and safely handle tools such as hammers and drills. They show ingenuity in the models and constructions they make using recyclable materials and commercial kits. The

children have well-developed skills of exploration and observation. One child, looking at the ice melting in the tray noted that the water was deeper in the middle and wondered why. The oldest children have used microscopes to look at seeds, have described differences in growing plants and know about the sun drying up liquids.

The children enjoy school, are enthusiastic learners and get on exceptionally well with each other and with adults.

13. The children show very positive attitudes to learning. When they arrive at school they receive a positive and warm welcome from the adults, which encourages them to be positive with each other. At the beginnings of sessions, the children move swiftly into their choice of activities, so no time is lost. The continuous uninterrupted sessions for structured play and focused activities enable the children to develop their concentration, to follow through their interests and to persevere at tasks of their choice. The positive reinforcement and encouragement they receive from all the adults and the skilful support for their play sustain the children's motivation.
14. The children co-operate well when working independently as well as when being supervised by an adult. The occasional disputes are understandable in children so young. For the greater part of the time, they co-operate and share well, when working at the computer, for example, or in the role-play area. Even the very youngest children are learning the expected routines of tidying up and of sharing apples and biscuits at snack time. Notably, at the time of the inspection, even though a large cohort of the oldest children had left the school at Christmas, the very newly admitted children were already beginning to learn by observing and playing alongside the older children.
15. During the inspection, the children approached the inspectors confidently and with great interest. They were keen to make name labels for them and to imitate the writing that inspectors were doing. They happily shared books with the visitors, asked questions and talked with them.
16. The parents are very positive about their children's social development and their confident attitudes to school and to learning. 100 percent of parents who returned questionnaires said their children like school and 96 percent said that the school helps the children to become mature and responsible. These positive views were endorsed at the pre-inspection meetings for parents.

The school provides an exceptionally broad range of exciting learning experiences, including very good opportunities for the children to learn about other cultures.

17. The Chelwood curriculum is not explicitly based on the six areas of learning defined in the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Nevertheless it does meet those expectations and is planned in considerable depth with attention to the development of a wide range of learning skills. The school is appropriately reviewing its curriculum planning with a view to implementing the Early Learning Goals which will supersede the Desirable Learning Outcomes in September 2000
18. Planning is centred round interesting topics, with a strong focus on learning outcomes to be developed through motivating activities, which are changed week by week. Some key activities are changed between the morning and afternoon sessions so that the curriculum for the children attending full time has variation built into the day. Each classroom, indoors and out, offers a wide range of learning experiences. On the day of the inspection, these included: large snails to observe; a good configuration of climbing equipment to encourage climbing under, over and through; opportunities for colour mixing; soapy water for washing dolls; cooking; exploratory work with sand and water, including iced water, wet and dry sand and buckets and pulleys; computers and a programmable toy; quiet rooms for looking at books and listening to story tapes and good provision of counting and writing materials.
19. There is a very strong multi-cultural profile in the provision of books, resources, displays and posters. At the time of the inspection, the children were learning about Chinese New Year. There was a very attractive display of Chinese artefacts in the entrance hall with Chinese music playing. Each classroom also had its own Chinese New Year display with books and artefacts for the children to look at. The role play area in one classroom had chopsticks and Chinese plates,

and at the end of the week the children were to enjoy a Chinese feast, courtesy of a local “takeaway”! The children have also enjoyed an African cultural experience, dressing up in ethnic clothes and drawing pictures of themselves in these costumes. In another classroom, the children had looked at the work of the artists Mondrian and Klee in the context of their work on pattern.

Parents are very much part of the school community and are successfully involved in supporting their children’s learning.

20. It is noteworthy that nearly 50 percent of parents completed questionnaires prior to the inspection of Chelwood and that 34 parents attended pre-inspection meetings. This is a high response rate and indicates the strength of the school’s partnership with parents. In the returned questionnaires, 100 percent of parents said that the school works closely with parents and that they find the school very approachable.
21. The school provides an excellent range of information to parents and carers. The school prospectus contains detailed information about matters such as the school’s aims, settling in procedures, the curriculum and routines and procedures. School policy documents and its last inspection report are prominently displayed in the entrance lobby. Information about the current educational programme in each class is also clearly displayed. Parents are regularly informed about school events, such as the school inspection, through well-displayed notices. There is also a noticeboard for the parents’ own use. The governors produce informative annual reports for parents and hold an annual meeting with them.
22. The school is very welcoming to parents and carers. When a child is about to start school, there is careful discussion with parents to establish the child’s interests and particular needs, and an opportunity for parents to record what they want their child to achieve at nursery school. Parents enjoy regular informal contact with the head teacher and the teaching teams, and so can raise any concerns or questions when they need to. The school provides a wide range of books, games packs and story props for parents to use with their children at home. Parents are very appreciative of these, finding them helpful in extending their children’s learning at home. If the school has any concerns, about a child’s progress or behaviour for example, then parents are immediately alerted and involved in discussion about the way forward. An extensive leaver’s report is written for each child and shared with parents, when children are about to move on to primary school. Should they wish to know about their child’s progress, parents know they can ask and will be given the information they need. However, in the parents’ questionnaire and at the pre-inspection meetings, a very few parents said they would welcome a formal opportunity to discuss their child’s progress midway during their time in nursery and the school could usefully consider developing such a procedure.

The school is very well led and managed

23. Since the 1995 inspection, the governors have very successfully strengthened their strategic role. They have formalised their involvement in, and monitoring of the school management plan, by considering the plan in draft and then monitoring progress with it systematically at whole governing body meetings and through their committee structure. Governors’ visits to the school focus on school management plan priorities. They have successfully negotiated with the local authority to have a delegated budget and are in their second year of local management. They make careful budget decisions, linking them as far as possible to priorities on the school management plan, and monitor spending regularly with good support from their bursar. The governors are now in a position to carry forward a small amount of their budget, appropriately about 5 percent, and have designated this money for redecorating the school.
24. The head teacher provides strong, supportive leadership. She has a clear vision for the school, which she communicates very successfully to governors, staff and parents, so that all subscribe to that vision. The effective teamwork she has established means that the whole staff team, supported by the governors, work within a shared understanding of high quality teaching and learning. Regular team and whole school meetings ensure that the practitioners consistently keep their practice under review.

25. The newly appointed deputy head teacher is already a strong member of the school team and has a clear understanding of the expectations for her role and her specific responsibilities. Each class teacher carries a fairly heavy subject management responsibility but this is made more manageable by the school's system of a rolling programme of curriculum review and development. As subject co-ordinators, the teachers lead curriculum development very well, by carefully reviewing practice and provision, updating their own expertise and leading training for their colleagues. They keep governors well informed of work they are doing in their subject areas, in relation to school management plan priorities.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The written reports for governors do not include overall judgements of standards in the school to help governors know how well the school is meeting expected national standards

26. The governing body, the head teacher and staff do have good knowledge of the school's strengths in areas such as teaching, curriculum, learning, and partnership with parents. There is a good programme for evaluating and developing the curriculum, such as the current work on developing mathematics and the planned work to look at ICT (information and communication technology). The head teacher and staff rigorously monitor the progress of individual children. However, this work is not yet leading to written reports on overall standards of achievement in the school, set against the Desirable Learning Outcomes, for example. The curriculum development work on mathematics is intended, as shown on the school management plan, to improve teaching and learning in this subject. It will help governors to know what has been the impact on children's learning and their achievements in mathematics. Similarly, the planned work on ICT includes the success criterion, "children using ICT to make books with imported graphics and images." Again, it will strengthen the governors' strategic role for them to know clearly the extent to which children's achievements in ICT have been improved. Reports on standards would enable governors to know how well the school is doing compared to national expectations, and to have an even better view of the impact of the school management plan and of their spending decisions.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

27. In order to maintain high standards and to strengthen further the strategic role of governors, the school should:
- (1) Evaluate more explicitly, through written reports, the improvements and impact on overall standards arising from curriculum review and development and other priorities on the school management plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	6
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	7

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
16%	84%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	90
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	25

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	9%	School data	0%

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	335393
Total expenditure	317939
Expenditure per pupil	3533
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	17454

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	132
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	90	10	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	82	15	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	23	5	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	63	27	4	2	4
The teaching is good.	77	21	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	36	0	11	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	10	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	33	4	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	82	17	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	79	18	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	30	12	2	4