

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KESGRAVE HIGH SCHOOL**

Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124849

Headteacher: George Thomas

Reporting inspector: Roy Hedge  
2932

Dates of inspection: 8 -10 January 2001

Inspection number: 186764

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Main Road  
Kesgrave  
Ipswich

Postcode: IP5 2PB

Telephone number: 01473 624855

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Margaret Young

Date of previous inspection: April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Kesgrave High School is a maintained comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16; at present there are 1052 students on roll. In September 2001 it will offer post 16 provision for the first time. Most students live nearby and more than eight out of ten cycle to school. Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds though there is a lower proportion of social deprivation in the area than is the case nationally. Although only 4.7 per cent of students had declared their eligibility for free school meals at the time of the inspection many more had done so in their previous schools. It is fairer to compare the school with others in which the proportion of eligible students is below, rather than well below average. Very few students are of ethnic minority heritage and there are none at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of students on the register of special educational needs is below average. The results attained by students in national tests taken at the end of Year 6 suggest that standards on entry to the school are above average; this is confirmed by the school's own testing.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Kesgrave High is an excellent school whose strengths far outweigh any weaknesses. Standards reached by students at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are well above average. GCSE points scores are high in comparison with similar schools. This is because the school has a clear dedication to high standards and good teaching and there is a civilised ethos in which learning can flourish.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards are high because of very good teaching and the way in which the school day is organised.
- Care for students is of the highest quality; students respond with excellent attitudes to school, concentrate and behave outstandingly well.
- Leadership and management are excellent.
- The quality of teaching, resourcing and accommodation for the physical and creative arts programme are all very impressive and students reach very high standards.

#### **What could be improved**

- In spite of considerable improvement since the last inspection, provision for religious education (RE) in Years 10 and 11 is still inadequate.
- A good deal of time is wasted when students are with their tutors at the beginning of the day.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in January 1996. Since that time very good progress has been made. Standards are now higher and the quality of teaching has improved. There has been much new building and a sixth form will open later this year. The Key Issues from the last report have been successfully addressed except that RE is still not satisfactory. Music provision, which was a problem at the time of the last inspection, is now a strength of the school. Teaching quality is now much more rigorously monitored and students' progress is very carefully recorded and analysed.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A*

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Students make excellent progress at Kesgrave High School. By the time they reach GCSE their achievements place the school in the top 5 per cent of similar schools nationally. Given that standards on entry to the school are above, though not well above average, results indicate considerable achievement on behalf of students and testify to the effectiveness of the school's provision.

In tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2000, students achieved scores that were well above the national average and the average for similar schools overall, in English and in science. Mathematics scores were above average and not as strong as other results in core subjects because too few pupils managed to reach the higher levels. Standards at the end of Year 9 are rising in line with the national trend. Girls do slightly better than boys, but the gap between their relative achievements is less than the gap nationally.

GCSE results are even stronger. The proportion of both boys and girls gaining at least five GCSE passes in the grade range A\* to C was well above average in 2000. The average GCSE points score per pupil was well above the national figure and very high compared with similar schools. Students did particularly well in expressive arts, business studies, geography and art. Standards are also very impressive in music. There were no subjects where results were poor.

The quality of work seen during the inspection was in line with test and examination results. The school has set an ambitious target for the proportion of students attaining at least 5 A\*-C GCSE grades in 2001 of 68 per cent. With 67 per cent achieving this in 2000, the school is well on course to meet the target since GCSE results have improved at a faster rate than the national trend in the last 5 years. The target for GCSE points score for 2001 was already exceeded in 2000.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Students work hard, concentrate in class and have positive attitudes to school and learning, which plays a considerable part in their success.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class and around the school is excellent. Movement around the site is particularly impressive.
Personal development and relationships	Students relate to one another and to their teachers very well. Relationships are very good at all levels. There is no evidence of bullying or other oppressive behaviour.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are well above average and the incidence of unauthorised absence is well below average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	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.*

The quality of teaching is very good and is the main reason why students do so well. Only 4 per cent of the teaching seen during the inspection was unsatisfactory. There is no department where the overall quality of teaching is not good. Most students rarely encounter any poor teaching. Some teaching of the highest quality was seen in English, music, history and information technology. The teaching of business education, art, physical education and music was consistently impressive during the inspection. The quality of teaching seen was good or better in more than nine out of ten of the lessons inspectors saw. Very good or excellent teaching accounted for over a half of the lessons seen. In almost every lesson, teachers used the full time available profitably. Lesson planning is careful and in almost every case met the needs of students at different levels of attainment in the many mixed ability classes. Where inspectors saw abler students not being sufficiently stretched and intellectually challenged, it was in mathematics and modern languages, where students are often grouped according to their attainment. In a Year 10 French lesson, for example, poor planning led to students losing interest in the tasks set, so standards were not high enough. In a Year 10 English lesson, by contrast, there was good planning, skilful and well-prepared use of students' group work. High expectations of what students might achieve and the setting of tasks from which students at all levels of ability could learn, led to very sophisticated work on a poem by William Blake. Encouragement and praise are used very well to motivate students, as in a design and technology lesson about clock design for Year 9 students. In most lessons students with special educational needs are well supported by teachers, who know them well, and often by other students.

There is good teaching of literacy and numeracy and students display considerable skills in both areas. As a result, the quality of students' spoken contributions to lessons is strikingly high. Many display considerable ability to talk about aspects of their work with much more depth of understanding and skill in explaining than is common.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Long lessons give students the opportunity to pursue topics in depth. The programme for religious education (RE) has improved since the last inspection but time allocation is still insufficient for Years 10 and 11.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. Teachers respond to individual special needs with skill and care. Monitoring of progress is very careful and effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for students' social development is outstanding. The ethos of the school and the atmosphere of calm and purposeful activity are very effective. There are high expectations of civilised and considerate behaviour. Moral and cultural education are very good. There is sound provision for students' spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is an area of outstanding provision. Students' progress is very skilfully monitored and this analysis is effectively used to provide appropriate support. There are high levels of concern for students' welfare and safety.



The three-period day causes some difficulties in the teaching of modern languages but overall it is very effective in promoting learning. Students have the opportunity to pursue topics to an unusual degree of sophistication and depth. The consequent lack of frequent movement around the school contributes to the atmosphere of purposeful activity. The National Curriculum is fully in place in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum that meets students' needs.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Outstanding. The vision and leadership of the Headteacher, working closely with senior staff, ensures close attention to educational priorities and high quality provision. The effectiveness of the school is closely monitored and every effort is made to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very effective. They know the school well and discharge their responsibilities effectively. Financial planning and oversight are very good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent use is made of test and examination results in order to illuminate strengths and weaknesses and there is systematic monitoring of the quality of provision, including observation of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are closely targeted on educational priorities. Strategic planning for staffing, educational resources and accommodation is careful and far-sighted.

The school offers excellent value for money. Financial resources are very well managed and principles of best value are applied. There is very good supervision of and support for teaching. Non-teaching staff are very well deployed and managed and make a considerable contribution to the smooth running of departments. The Headteacher has a clear and sophisticated vision for the school that is shared by staff and governors. This consistent approach is a key reason for the school's success. There is a clear commitment to students' academic and social well being, which is supported by intelligent and careful management. Staff with management responsibilities are well supported through monitoring, training and coaching and most are very effective.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are expected to work hard</li> <li>• Students make good progress</li> <li>• Students like school</li> <li>• There is a good range of activities outside lessons</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting of homework</li> <li>• School's capacity to work closely with parents</li> <li>• Information for parents about students' progress</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments. The setting of homework is usually effective: tasks are worthwhile and support learning. Some parents believe there is too much homework and some say there is too little. Inspectors were not able to collect first hand evidence about the school's capacity to work closely with parents. Reports about students' progress are good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Standards are high because of very good teaching and the way in which the school day is organised.**

1. Most lessons at Kesgrave last 95 minutes, which is much longer than is usual. Most of these classes contain students from the full range of attainment. There is no withdrawal of students with special educational needs. Most teachers react to these arrangements with considerable skill, using the opportunity offered to develop carefully planned lessons that meet students' needs very well.
2. In most of the lessons seen by inspectors, students produced work of considerable quality. Kesgrave teachers have become very skilful in using the opportunities presented by long lessons to encourage students to work in depth, developing their subject knowledge and skills. Groups of students in a Year 10 music lesson, because of the teacher's good planning and considerable personal musical skills, were able to use a long lesson to study a piece of music then play it in ensemble, using a range of instruments. The combination of planning and time allowed for long periods of concentrated work, trial and error and teamwork, then the early stages of performance. Excellent progress was made.
3. Not all teachers and departments make the best possible use of the long lessons. In a number of mathematics and modern languages lessons there was some waste of time as students tired of activities which failed to sustain their motivation or concentration. The most serious effects were in French, where teachers and students alike found it difficult to maintain the use of the target language for a great enough proportion of the time available to ensure really good language learning. The department has not devised imaginative ways of sustaining French usage for enough of the lessons. The infrequency of French lessons exacerbates the difficulty as lower attaining students forget some of what they have learnt between lessons. In some mathematics classes and occasionally in science, the pace of activity tails off towards the ends of lessons. Generally, though, these problems are limited as teachers and students make good use of time.
4. Students with special educational needs flourish in these circumstances. Teachers plan for their particular needs and there is time for teachers to check their progress and provide individual support where necessary. Excellent monitoring of their progress is managed by the learning support department and extra targeted help is provided through a range of activities before school and during breaks and lunchtimes. There is good extra support in class for students with statements of special need. The highest attainers benefit similarly from the individual attention which long lessons make possible and some of their work scrutinised by inspectors was of the highest quality.
5. The habit of working together in groups on a frequent basis has a powerful impact on learning. In many lessons, a group of students might work together for 30 minutes discussing an issue or problem, formulating and noting views. The quality of ideas generated is markedly better than is often the case in schools where time is more limited. The quality of oral feedback given by members of groups when they report back to the whole class is also improved. Presentation skills are much better than is usual. Students can develop a case with skill and present it lucidly. Working together in an atmosphere of purposeful activity also develops students' social skills. Teachers introduce key vocabulary, which helps literacy skills.

6. Planning of learning in subjects with a significant practical content is made easier by the long lessons. Students learn to work independently. In a well-planned Year 9 science lesson on food and digestion and a Year 7 design and technology lesson about kites, series of individual and paired activities promoted good understanding of the topics. Teachers consistently manage students well in lessons where a good variety of tasks involves changes in activity or groupings. First class management of time and students was apparent in a Year 7 dance lesson and a Year 7 physical education class on basketball. Good, crisp starts are frequently made to lessons, constructing an atmosphere based on high expectations of students' motivation. The objectives of the lesson are usually set out so that students know what they are expected to do and learn.
7. As a result of teaching and curriculum organisation of this quality, students' achievements are considerable. Standards on entry to the school are above average, but by the time students take GCSE examinations they are well above. Students do exceptionally well in comparison with other students in similar schools.

**Care for students is of the highest quality; students respond with excellent attitudes to school, concentrate and behave outstandingly well.**

8. The quality of care for students is excellent. Teachers have the opportunity in long lessons to get to know them and to meet their individual needs. Form tutors similarly know students well, though some considerable time is wasted during the morning registration sessions when students are with their tutors.
9. Students' academic progress is monitored outstandingly well. The school has invested considerable time, energy and creativity in devising excellent computer-based tracking systems that enable the progress of individual or groups of students to be followed as they move through the school. Analysis of this information allows targets to be set, which both teachers and tutors use well to counsel students.
10. Students with special educational needs benefit particularly from this work. Teachers are aware of their progress and are in a position to tailor learning in ways from which they will benefit. The learning support specialist staff use data well to provide extra help where necessary. Learning support assistants monitor and note students' difficulties and progress constantly. As a result, these students achieve very well.
11. Students' response to the high levels of care is excellent. Behaviour in lessons and around the site is excellent. Movement between lessons is reduced to a minimum because of the three-period day. At breaks and lunchtimes students are free to stay in the building and make use of facilities such as computers and musical instruments. Students appreciate the trust placed in them and respond by treating the school's facilities and equipment with care.
12. Relationships between staff and students are characterised by high levels of mutual respect and consideration. An ethos of polite, good-humoured collaboration pervades classrooms. Tutors expect high levels of participation and concentration and are rewarded by good behaviour and focused activity by students. Lessons are enjoyable and engage students' interest. Students frequently help one another, particularly in group work. The working atmosphere around the school is excellent.

**The school is outstandingly well led and managed.**

13. The quality of management is first class. The Headteacher has a coherent educational vision for the school and has successfully secured allegiance to it from staff and governors. There is clear commitment to a philosophy of learning that focuses on meeting the needs of all students and expecting much of them.
14. The long lessons and a high proportion of mixed ability teaching are central instruments for the implementation of the school's philosophy. In the context of this school and with this staff they work very well in spite of some difficulties, particularly in modern languages teaching, though languages are taught in groups organised by ability. Learning in classrooms is very impressive and the needs of students at different levels of attainment are met well.
15. The school's excellent assessment data collection is analysed with skill and imagination to identify strengths and weaknesses in provision, and remedial action is taken where necessary. The quality of music provision, for example, has been wholly transformed since the last inspection.
16. Supervision and monitoring by senior staff of the quality of teaching and departmental management is excellent. There is regular and systematic close evaluation of the work of departments, which includes observation of lessons, student interviews and reviews of students' work. Staff with posts of responsibility are "coached" on a regular basis by senior staff. These measures have led to high levels of determination to improve the quality of provision and drive up standards.
17. Governors work well in collaboration with the Headteacher. There are high levels of mutual trust. Financial planning is very good. Governors know the school well, monitor its activities and are in a position to act as "critical friends" of the school.

**The quality of teaching and provision for the physical and creative arts programme is very impressive and students reach very high standards.**

18. All students spend part of their time in the physical and creative arts area throughout their time in the school. As a consequence, GCSE participation rates in this area are much higher than usual. GCSE results are very good.
19. The quality of teaching in the area is also very good. Teachers make excellent use of the long lessons to interweave theoretical and practical work. Departmental planning is very good. Lessons engage students' interest and good learning is combined with considerable enjoyment. In the music department, good teaching and excellent resources mean that almost every student can play an instrument at some level. Lessons include much practical work and opportunities for ensemble performance. Keyboard skills are routinely taught in Years 7, 8 and 9. Standards in lessons are well above average.

20. Teaching of art is very good. Year 11 students were doing mock GCSE examinations during the inspection and were producing work of very high quality. In Year 8 lessons about costume, students' research was set up well and engaged students' interest. In a Year 7 dance lesson, the teacher's presentation skills, excellent grasp of the subject and clear exposition led to work of a high standard, especially by girls. A very skilfully planned and executed drama lesson with Year 10 boys produced an excellent response and work of high quality. The quality of teaching in design and technology promotes very good individual work and high standards. These lessons are typical of the quality of work seen throughout the area. The opportunities for creative work are much better than those at most schools. Students respond with enthusiasm and produce work of high quality.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**In spite of considerable improvement since the last inspection, provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is still inadequate.**

21. There was inadequate provision for RE in Years 10 and 11 at the time of the last inspection and, in spite of some improvement, more still needs to be done. Provision has been enhanced through the introduction of a GCSE course in RE that meets the needs of those students who choose it. Other students attend three RE conferences over the two years of the key stage. Although these conferences are planned with care and energy, they do not represent sufficient time spent on the subject to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus, especially those aspects which deal with religious teaching, concepts and ritual. Requirements could be much better met if conferences were held three times each year. This would provide opportunities to do greater justice to the agreed syllabus without involving the school in unnecessary and undesirable major changes to the curriculum arrangements that work so well.

**A good deal of time is wasted when students are with their tutors at the beginning of the day.**

22. The school day begins with a fifteen-minute session when students meet with their form tutors. During the inspection much time was wasted in these sessions. In a Year 7 session, for example, some administrative tasks were done but students spent the rest of the time chatting; time was wasted and the occasion did not constitute a purposeful start to the day.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

23. The school should now:

- (1) improve provision for religious education further by doubling the number of conferences and closely relating their content to the Local Agreed Syllabus; (see paragraph 21)
- (2) ensure that tutors use profitably the 15 minutes of time they spend with their students at the beginning of the day. (see paragraph 22)

## **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

## Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	44	42	4	4	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	Years 7-11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1052
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	44

Special educational needs	Years 7-11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	112

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

## Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.4

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

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	107	103	210

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	82	91	90
	Girls	95	79	86
	Total	177	170	176
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (83)	81 (82)	84 (78)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	48 (48)	48 (45)	30 (23)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	87	95	81
	Girls	90	95	88
	Total	177	190	169
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (80)	90 (84)	80 (73)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	50 (44)	57 (44)	46 (38)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	76	82	158

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	48	74	75
	Girls	58	80	81
	Total	106	154	156
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	67 (69)	97 (99)	99 (100)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	51
	National	38.4

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	9
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	1
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	1023
Any other minority ethnic group	9

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Years 7 - 11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	56.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Years 7 - 11**

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	386

#### **Deployment of teachers: Years 7 - 11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	72.8
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#### **Average teaching group size: Years 7 - 11**

Key Stage 3	26.1
Key Stage 4	22.1

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	2,139,459
Total expenditure	2,169,010
Expenditure per pupil	2340
Balance brought forward from previous year	40,149
Balance carried forward to next year	10,598

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1052
Number of questionnaires returned	202

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	50	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	42	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	57	5	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	55	19	3	1
The teaching is good.	30	61	3	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	50	16	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	37	7	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	24	49	18	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	49	40	3	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	44	3	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	47	3	1	4