

INSPECTION REPORT

CHURCH PREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Church Preen, Church Stretton

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123359

Headteacher: Mr. M. J. Pye

Reporting inspector: Mr. C. Kessell
20695

Dates of inspection: 24th - 25th January, 2000

Inspection number: 190105
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Preen Church Stretton Shropshire
Postcode:	SY6 7LH
Telephone number:	01694 771359
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R. G. Ball
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6 - 8
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	9 - 13
Standards of work are high particularly in English and mathematics	
Teaching is good	
The pupils are very eager to learn	
The school is very well managed by the headteacher who is well supported by all staff and a knowledgeable governing body	
There is a caring environment with very good provision for the pupils' personal development	
The parents' views of the school are very good	
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	13 - 14
Standards in science for the more able pupils	
Curriculum planning that acknowledges the movement of Year 2 pupils into a new class during the academic year	
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	14
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	15 - 17

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Church Preen Primary School is much smaller than other primary schools with 67 full-time pupils. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below the national average. The majority of pupils arrive at school by mini-bus, taxi or car. The school is popular and the number on roll has increased since the last inspection by 23. The average class size is 22. Attainment of the four-year-olds when they start school is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with many outstanding features. The teachers have high expectations and pupils learn effectively. The headteacher leads the school very well and outstanding teamwork amongst all staff is a notable feature. The school provides good value for money. The strengths of the school greatly outweigh its weaknesses.

What the school does well

- Standards of work are high particularly in English and mathematics.
- The pupils are very eager to learn. They have positive attitudes and are very well behaved.
- Teaching is good.
- The school is very well managed by the headteacher who is well supported by all staff and a knowledgeable governing body.
- There is a caring environment with very good provision for the pupils' personal development.
- The parents' views of the school are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in science for the more able pupils.
- Whole school curriculum planning that acknowledges the movement of Year 2 pupils into a new class during the academic year.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved very well since the last inspection in October 1996. This is also the view of parents. Standards have improved, although small year groups can cause significant year to year variation. The curriculum for information technology has developed well as have the resources for the subject. The school now has one computer to every ten pupils. The quality of teaching is consistently good and the school has a good range of assessment procedures that allow the careful monitoring of pupils' achievements. All statutory regulations are now met. Not all of the weaknesses in relation to safety provision have been addressed, specifically the unfenced stream. However, the school has done its best to minimise the risks associated with this issue.

STANDARDS

The pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests for 1999 compared with all schools and similar schools is not published because the year group was less than ten pupils. Evidence from inspection indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average in both key stages. Pupils' competence in information technology is about average by the time they are eleven. The National Curriculum test results will vary because of the small year groups. By five years of age, the majority of children exceed most targets set nationally for pupils of this age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils are very keen to learn. They have very good attitudes to their work and are very positive about the other aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Consistently very good throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good overall and the older pupils have a number of opportunities to take on extra responsibility.
Attendance	Very high in comparison with other schools.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are notable features of the school. The lunchtime break, where the older pupils serve the younger children their dinner, is a wonderful example of pupils being prepared to take responsibility and conducting themselves in a mature and sensible fashion. In all classrooms, pupils are encouraged to give their views and opinions, and to think for themselves.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	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 in English and mathematics is consistently good in both key stages. Lessons are very well organised and the teachers have a good understanding of the basic skills for literacy and numeracy. Lessons are always interesting and adult:pupil relationships are very good. Time is rarely wasted and all pupils contribute well to lessons. Overall, pupils learn well and make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and fulfils statutory requirements. It is supported by a range of day-trips, residential activities and extra-curricular activities. However, more thought needs to be given to whole school curriculum organisation in the class with pupils from two key stages.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Support for these pupils is good and parents acknowledge this. Pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The pupils have a very good understanding of their moral and social responsibilities. Good provision is made for the pupils' spiritual development and appropriate opportunities are provided to develop an understanding of cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Church Preen provides a very happy and caring environment where pupils feel safe and secure. The school works very well with its parents and there are very effective home/school links.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school's very positive ethos is a tribute to the high quality leadership provided by the headteacher, who is very well supported by a strong team of teaching and non-teaching staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very committed to the school and its success. They are very effective in their duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a good understanding of its work and is always striving to do better. Teaching and learning are well monitored.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of all staff and the resources made available to the school. Although the building is small, the school makes the best use available, of all space.

The principles of best value are applied well in the management of the school and its use of resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The very friendly family atmosphere. • The positive attitudes that the school encourages. • The school is well organised and well led. • Lessons have good pace and plenty of work is done. • The parental and community support enjoyed by the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some concerns about the limited space available.

The inspection team would support the positive views expressed by the parents. As the school numbers have risen and there are more computers in the school, space is becoming more limited. This is very well managed by the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards of work are high particularly in English and mathematics

1. Pupils achieve above average standards particularly in English and mathematics. This is reflected in the 1999 National Curriculum test results for Key Stage 2, although the impact of small year groups can significantly influence the school's results from one year to another.

2. The reception pupils read confidently together from a 'big book' and then give examples of sentences that ask questions. They listen attentively as Year 1 pupils read aloud and contribute confidently to questions about the text the class are reading. The children have a good understanding of how books are organised and recognise familiar words in a simple text. Some of the children have only been in the school a short time. There is a strong emphasis on the basic skills of reading and writing, particularly with the younger pupils, and these are practised every morning. All pupils in the school enjoy stories and this is well illustrated by the Year 2 pupils who listen carefully to the story of 'Jason and the Golden Fleece' as read from a book and play script. They are very disappointed when the reading has finished because they are so absorbed and interested in what they are hearing. This is also due to the text being exceptionally well read by the classteacher who brought the story to life and was an excellent role model for good reading. The response of the pupils for volunteers to read the play script was overwhelming. Year 2 pupils participate eagerly in the discussion about the differences between a story and play script. They identify spoken words and begin to use adjectives to describe characters. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have developed their knowledge and understanding of literacy well. Using dictionaries and thesauruses the pupils build a word bank of appropriate and thoughtful adjectives to describe characters from the story 'Theseus and the Minotaur'. The plenary session at the end of the lesson includes an interesting debate about the adjectives chosen and whether they are suitable for particular characters. Pupils are encouraged to question their own thinking and offer reasons for their choices. Good teaching and learning contribute significantly to the high standards of work.

3. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been well introduced in the school and there is a particular emphasis on the development of the essential 'basic-skills' in these areas. These skills are taught well by the teachers, for example, spelling is an important part of each day and the pupils respond well to this. One Year 5 pupil commented that the daily spelling sessions had improved his spelling and introduced him to a range of words that he would have never normally used. Not only is the teaching skilful, but pupils are expected to 'give their best effort' all of the time and this is clearly understood. In mathematics, Year 2 pupils confidently add two-digit numbers together while Year 6 pupils investigate and identify the rules of division as they relate to different numbers. The older pupils are confident in developing their own strategies and trying out ideas of their own.

4. Expectations are always high in the school and it is quite apparent that pupils are expected to achieve the standards of which they are capable. The headteacher and staff are always looking at ways to improve the educational experience of the pupils. This is extended across the whole curriculum. In a good Key Stage 2 history lesson, pupils improved their investigative skills and the need for careful observation and recording as they studied a variety of good quality Greek artefacts. The lesson is developed skilfully by

the classteacher and the pupils begin to show empathy for the period in history and view the artefacts in an appropriate context.

5. The pupils' reading, writing and speaking contribute significantly to the pupils learning across the whole curriculum and the school tries to ensure that the subjects covered in literacy are linked to class topics.

Teaching is good

6. Throughout the school the quality of teaching is consistently good. This has a significant impact on the pupils' learning, which is also good. Although all classes contain mixed age groups, teachers carefully ensure that work is planned for all ages and abilities and that all pupils are provided with appropriate experiences. Lessons are always conducted at a good pace and time is rarely wasted. Time limits are sometimes imposed on pupils as they undertake different activities. This is good practice and motivates the pupils even more. The teachers are always active and once pupils start group or individual tasks they are constantly monitoring what pupils are achieving and offering support through advice or carefully constructed questions.

7. Control and discipline are very good, as are the relationships in the classes. A significant feature through the school is the way in which all pupils are encouraged to take an active part in all lessons by contributing their ideas and answering questions. However, this is conducted in such a way, that pupils do not feel embarrassed if they give a wrong answer or are unsure of their subject knowledge. All pupils feel that they can contribute and this provides a positive approach to learning. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and encourage an enthusiasm for learning. Support staff and parent helpers are also used well and they make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and educational experiences. For example, in one lesson with reception pupils, the question posed to a school inspector by an under five child; "What are you doing here?" was cleverly used by a parent helper to reinforce the need for question marks at the end of sentences that are questions.

8. Work is marked regularly, often with the pupils in a lesson, as it was during spelling and handwriting practice. In some cases useful comments are provided to challenge the pupils' thinking or help them move on to the next stages of learning. A Year 1 pupil was clearly proud of having achieved the target 'to improve handwriting' that was written on the inside of her language book. Another good practice is the sharing of lesson objectives or the proposed outcomes of a programme of work. Year 6 pupils, who were building a word bank of descriptive words, clearly understood that their words would eventually be used in poems that they were writing at the end of the week. Much of the teaching is very stimulating and interesting. In a Key Stage 1 science lesson pupils gained an appreciation of the need for a fair test and learnt the difference between a guess and prediction. Careful questioning by teachers also ensures that learning has taken place and enables teachers to adjust or reorganise their planning for future lessons.

The pupils are very eager to learn. They have positive attitudes and are very well behaved

9. The pupils' attitudes to school and their work are consistently very good. From the moment that they arrive at school, pupils know exactly what is expected of them, they remain on task, concentrate fully and co-operate well with each other. As Year 5 and 6 pupils enter their class, they begin their 'morning work' before registration. They take responsibility for this and there is a buzz of enthusiasm as they begin. The pupils talk

confidently about what they are doing and are obviously used to being given responsibility, which they accept sensibly. No time is wasted due to the pupils' positive attitudes and high levels of motivation.

10. Pupils throughout the school are clearly inspired by their teachers and each other. During a science lesson on 'how sound is made' the pupils asked questions that were mature and thoughtful and this reflected their fascination with the subject. One pupil described a vibration 'like a bee's wings flapping' and this was met with approval by his peers. All pupils talk confidently about their current work or work that has been covered previously. Even the youngest pupils in the school, some of whom had only been in the school for a few weeks at the time of the inspection, quickly absorb the good working habits observed in all of the other year groups. In English they are keen to read out aloud, while in science they make sensible suggestions after thinking carefully about what they are going to say.

11. When pupils work at group activities or individually the same enthusiasm and positive attitudes are maintained. Although the pupils regularly hold conversations with each other it is quite apparent that they are discussing their work, how it can be improved or completed successfully. Resources and equipment are used appropriately and this was observed while pupils were working at the computer, handling artefacts and resources in science. Although there are high expectations of pupils and these are maintained rigorously, learning is undertaken in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere.

The school is very well managed by the headteacher who is well supported by all staff and a knowledgeable governing body

12. The school is very well managed by the headteacher and this was the view of the parents at the pre-inspection meeting. At the last inspection the headteacher had only been in post for a matter of weeks, however, it is quite apparent to the parents that he is responsible for the rise in standards, the good school organisation and the very good overall improvement since the last inspection and the exceptionally positive ethos, now found in the school. He is very well supported by an effective team of teaching and non-teaching staff. The commitment to raising standards and maintaining them is very apparent throughout the whole school and percolates all aspects of school life from the standards of pupils' work and behaviour, to the quality of teaching.

13. The school has a good understanding of what it does well and areas that require development. The headteacher and staff are always striving to improve and are open to suggestions and ideas. Pupils' learning is carefully monitored and if there are any concerns these are immediately targeted. The headteacher is able to monitor teaching both formally and informally. As a teaching head he provides a good role model for other staff. It is quite apparent that the staff work well together and are a strong team. It is no surprise that pupil numbers have increased since the last inspection. The public perception of Church Preen Primary is of a good, well-managed school that achieves high standards and provides a supportive learning environment for its pupils. This view is supported by inspection evidence.

14. The commitment to improvement and high standards also extends to the governing body, but they would readily acknowledge that much of the driving force behind the recent success has come from the headteacher. However, the governors are well informed and have a very good understanding of the running of the school. They take their responsibilities very carefully and do their best to ensure that the educational priorities identified by the school are supported through careful management of the school

resources. The headteacher and governors are constantly reviewing school spending and will always consider a number of options before coming to a final decision. Changes in the school cleaning arrangements and providing the additional class for the school are examples of prudent and sensible financial management. Although the governors do not formally visit the school many of them visit on a regular basis and have a good understanding of what is happening in the school. They take pride in how important the school is regarded by the local community and are very open in their management of the school. All parents receive a copy of the headteacher's report to governors and 'governors concerns' is an agenda item at each governors' meeting with parent governors very much in mind.

There is a caring environment with very good provision for the pupils' personal development

15. Pupils' personal development is very good. This is reflected well during the school's lunchtime organisation which is an extremely pleasant social occasion. Dinner sittings start with a prayer that is said carefully and thoughtfully by the pupils. The upper Key Stage 2 pupils serve the younger children, staff and visitors their food. This is managed extremely sensibly. The whole pace of the occasion is very civilised and the pupils accept and contribute to this process. There is no frenetic atmosphere where pupils attempt to finish their meals as quickly as possible. There are no raised voices or any inappropriate behaviour. The pupils sit and talk quietly to each other or members of staff in a mature manner. Teachers and non-teaching staff provide good role models. During the inspection, lunchtime was a notable feature of the school. Pupils discussed the school visit to the Millennium Dome, highlighting their favourite aspects and making suggestions on how it could be improved! They asked thoughtful questions about the school inspection process. A Year 6 pupil was observed comforting a younger child who had hurt himself coming in from the playground. This was not a contrived situation but an automatic response; one pupil genuinely caring for another.

16. During the school assembly all pupils listened intently to Arabic music as they entered the school hall and sat down. During the time offered for reflection the pupils thought carefully about the assembly story or prepared to pray. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to each other and show respect for other's ideas and feelings. Standards of behaviour are extremely high and relationships are very good. Pupils do not have any worries about bad behaviour or bullying. New pupils speak very highly of the school and comment on how easy it is to settle in and become part of the community. 'The work is harder, but the teachers are nicer' commented one new child! The school supports a number of charities such as Barnardo's and Cancer Research. This reflects the school's caring approach, which led a number of pupils to suggest that they would not change anything in the school even if they were allowed to!

The parents' views of the school are very good

17. As well as being very supportive of the school the parents' views are very positive. This was reflected at the pre-inspection meeting, through the parents' questionnaires and meeting with parent governors. Parents are clear that the school achieves high standards, helps pupils to learn and make progress and promotes positive attitudes and values. Although many of the pupils travel long distances to get to school, punctuality is good because pupils are keen to attend and parents are aware of this.

18. Links with parents are good and they are provided with plenty of information about school activities and events. They feel well informed. Parents think very highly of the pupils'

annual reports, which they feel, are informative and individual. A number of parents draw positive comparisons with the standard of reports from other schools. Formal meetings with teachers take place twice each year, but such is the culture of the school, that it is always possible to talk informally about the attainment and progress of individual pupils. Parents feel that they have a clear view of what their children are learning and how successful they are. Very few parents feel the need to complain but are confident that any complaint or suggestion would be received positively. The school has a very active Parent Teacher Association. It provides funding for many activities including the school swimming.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in science for the more able pupils

19. The National Curriculum tests for 1999 in Key Stage 2 showed that the percentage of pupils reaching level 4 or above in science was very high in comparison with the national average. This was consistent with the other core subjects of English and mathematics. Although the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in English was well above the national average and in mathematics very high in comparison with the national average; the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in science was close to the national average. Looking at the pupils' performance over time, using average National Curriculum points, indicates that the pupils' performance in science is not as consistent or as high as the other core subjects at the end of Key Stage 2. Although the more able pupils are achieving high standards in English and mathematics, this is not the case for science.

20. The school identified a similar, but more obvious inconsistency in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1. Pupils did not achieve the same high standards in writing as they did in reading. The school analysed the work very carefully and introduced some different strategies that included a spelling and writing emphasis and also brought in new resources. They are confident that these will have an impact on national test results in 2000 and have already seen an improvement in the pupils' spelling.

Curriculum planning that acknowledges the movement of Year 2 pupils into a new class during the academic year

21. Although the school planning has a number of strengths, at present it does not recognise that during the current academic year the Year 2 pupils have moved into a class that contains pupils from a different key stage, Years 3 and 4. This move has been necessary because of the increased numbers in the school and there has been a full consultation with the parents of the pupils involved. Although a split key stage class is not an ideal situation, it is not necessarily an uncommon feature in a small school. However, for this to work effectively and for the pupils to experience their key stage curriculum entitlement, work has to be planned that reflects both key stages. At present this is not the case, and this is impacting on the pupils' educational experience. For example, the current science topic in the middle class is 'sound'. The Year 2 pupils have already covered a science topic involving sound during this academic year. Although it can be argued that these pupils are working at a higher level, they are also being restricted from studying other elements of the science curriculum. It should be noted that this is not a criticism of the classteacher in the middle class, but an issue regarding whole school planning.

22. The inspection findings have highlighted shortcomings in science planning. Other areas of the curriculum also have particular features that are found in Key Stage 1 and should be taught to pupils in that age group. The cycle of topics produced by the school for separate key stage classes has been well thought through and ensures progression in different subjects. The curriculum planning will now need to acknowledge that classes will change during the academic year. This would be a good time for the school to review their curriculum. From September 2000 all schools will be expected to deliver the revised National Curriculum after interim arrangements to allow the start of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

23. The inspection team recognise school's high standards and positive ethos, but to improve further the standards achieved and the quality of education the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Raise the standards in science for the more able pupils by careful analysis of the science curriculum to ensure that appropriate experiences are provided for these pupils, particularly in experimental and investigative science.
- (2) Ensure that the whole school curriculum organisation reflects that one class has two key stages and the newly revised National Curriculum.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	11
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
0	9	82	9	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	67
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	67
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	119 093
Total expenditure	124 190
Expenditure per pupil	1 805
Balance brought forward from previous year	9 750
Balance carried forward to next year	4 653

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	65
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	15	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	79	21	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	82	18	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	39	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	91	9	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	82	18	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	9	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	15	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	79	21	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	91	9	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	85	15	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	30	15	0	3