

# INSPECTION REPORT

**EDMONDSLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114001

Headteacher: Mr E Dodd

Reporting inspector: Mr L Garner  
25507

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Inspection number: 190942

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Front Street  
Edmondsley  
County Durham

Postcode: DH7 6DU

Telephone number: 0191 371 0443

Fax number: 0191 371 0443

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr B Davison

Date of previous inspection: 1 July 1996

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>10</b>
Pupils' standards of attainment in the core subjects, by the time they leave school, are higher than similar schools and nationally.	
The leadership provided by the headteacher is inspirational.	
Pupils are very well behaved and have very good attitudes to the work they do.	
Pupils are taught well.	
The school has excellent relationships with parents.	
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>14</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Edmondsley is a small village primary school on the outskirts of Chester-le-Street. The village was a mining community but, with the closure of the mine, is now an area of high unemployment. Children from the village account for about half of the pupils in school. The remaining pupils come from neighbouring villages and new housing developments between Durham and Chester-le-Street. At the time of the inspection there were 134 full-time pupils taught in five classes. There were a further 39 children attending the Nursery part-time, either mornings or afternoons. Most of the pupils who are in the Reception class have attended the Nursery. Children's attainment, when they begin Nursery, is what would normally be expected from children of this age. Just over 20 per cent of the pupils are entitled to a free school meal, which is broadly in line with the national average. There are 20 pupils on the school's register of special needs with three of these pupils having statements of special educational needs. These figures are broadly in line with the national average. No pupils come from homes where English is spoken as an additional language.

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

This is a very effective school with some outstanding features. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, who has the full support of the very hard-working teaching and support staff and the total confidence of parents, has created an ethos in which all have a commitment to high standards. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are taught well and the relationships throughout the school are excellent. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- Pupils' standards of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, by the time they leave school, are much higher than those seen in schools nationally and in similar schools.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and he is well supported by the very hard-working staff.
- Pupils are very well behaved and have very good attitudes. Relationships between adults and pupils, and amongst pupils, are excellent.
- Pupils are taught well, their work is carefully assessed and their personal development is very well promoted.
- The school has excellent relationships with parents. They have great confidence in the school.

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

- The over-use of commercially produced worksheets in some subjects, particularly at the top of Key Stage 1.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents and carers at the school.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected in July 1996. All the issues identified for development have been successfully tackled. All staff have had additional training in aspects of design and technology, extra resources have been provided to support mathematics teaching and the playground has been re-surfaced. The school has worked well with parents to reduce the number of pupils taking more than two weeks' holiday during term time. High attainment, by the time pupils leave the school, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, has been maintained. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development remain a strength, and relationships are judged to be even better than before, when they were very good. A higher proportion of very good teaching was observed. The provision of an extra class, giving smaller class sizes, is an asset. The school is in a strong position to continue to maintain its strengths, and to make further progress from already high standards.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	C	A	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	B	A	A	
science	B	A	A	A	

In 1999, standards in the national end of Key Stage 2 tests (SATs) in English, mathematics and science were well above the average, both for schools nationally and for similar schools. The school's trend in results is one of improvement and has remained higher than the improving national trend for the last four years. On inspection, the standards seen in the present Year 6 were generally above the expectation for the age of the pupils. However not all pupils are working at the level seen last year. This is because a small number of pupils in this year group find learning difficult and, although achieving as well as they can, are unlikely to reach the level expected by the end of the key stage. The targets the school has set for the pupils of this year group to achieve in the national tests are realistic.

In 1999, standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the national tests for seven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 1, were above the national average and well above the results of similar schools.

Taking the 1999 results as typical, pupils are making good progress throughout the school. Results can vary greatly from year-to-year because of the small number of pupils in each year group and the effect that two or three lower attaining pupils might have. However, pupils are learning well and achieving good, and often very good, standards overall.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are interested in the work they do and enjoy coming to school. They work very hard in lessons and the oldest pupils in particular show outstanding commitment in lessons, because of the quality of the teaching and the relationships in the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The high expectations of teachers and parents encourage pupils to regard very good behaviour as the norm.
Personal development and relationships	Very good overall. Relationships between all staff and pupils, and amongst pupils, are excellent. Pupils from the village and outside areas get on very well together. This makes the school a harmonious community in which everyone is valued and respected. The staff help pupils to develop a very good understanding of how their behaviour affects others.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils' attendance is close to the national average.

## 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 is good overall with some very good features. During the inspection, almost all the teaching seen was good or very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed and a literacy lesson observed in the oldest class was outstanding. The major strengths in teaching are linked to the excellent relationships and the way teachers and parents are clear about the aims of the school. This means that the very well prepared lessons are appreciated by the pupils who respond to them very well. Teaching is very effectively monitored by the headteacher. There are high expectations of what pupils should do and how they should behave. Very good questioning in many classes make pupils think carefully about the work they are doing, and lessons are delivered at a good pace enabling pupils to make good progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work revealed some aspects which could be improved. Some of the presentation of work lacked the high quality that pupils normally achieve. At the end of Key Stage 1, an over-reliance on commercially produced worksheets for topic work means that pupils spend too much time on routine tasks rather than thinking carefully about the work they are doing.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used well. Other subjects are often taught together in topics. Curricular planning for these topics is very well done. This means that pupils are very interested in the topic work they do, but also that the skills and knowledge needed for individual subjects are covered.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' individual education plans provide good guidance for teachers. Parents are involved well in their children's work and understand how they can help at home. Pupils who may have special needs are identified soon after they start school and the way their work is monitored has a good effect on the progress they make.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very well for pupils' overall personal development. This provision is firmly linked to the ethos of the school in which all are valued as individuals. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and that for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures in place for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. Pupils' academic achievements, their progress, behaviour and personal development are monitored very well.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher is at the heart of the school. He is an inspirational leader ably supported by his deputy. There are very effective management systems in place which support all staff well. All are clear about what is expected of them. Teaching standards are very well monitored by the headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The committed and well organised governing body supports the management well and is kept well informed of how the school is operating. They fulfil the role of a 'critical' friend very well. They have a shared vision of what kind of school they want. The chair of governors knows the school well and is aware of what is being done. He gives good support to the headteacher. All the recommended documents for school governance are in place.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is a strength of the school. Test results are analysed carefully. This information is used very well to predict how well individual pupils are likely to perform in the end of key stage national tests, and to plan improvements in performance.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purpose. Educational priorities are well supported through careful financial planning. The school applies the principles of best value appropriately.

## 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>• Their children like school.</li><li>• They think their children are well taught, behave very well and make good progress.</li><li>• They feel they are very well informed about how their children are doing and that any minor problems are dealt with promptly because staff are so approachable.</li><li>• They think the school is very well led and that it expects their children to work hard.</li><li>• They like the homework which is provided.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access to school clubs for pupils in Key Stage 1.</li></ul>

The overall response from parents' questionnaires and at the parents' meeting with the reporting inspector was very positive. Inspectors' judgements support all the positive views. A small number of parents would like to see out-of-school clubs open for younger children. Our judgement is that the extra-curricular provision is as good as that seen in most schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Pupils' standards of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, by the time they leave school, are much higher than those seen in schools nationally and in similar schools.**

- The pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science in their National Curriculum tests.
- In the Nursery, children are already beginning to recognise their names and link them to their photographs. They listen carefully to the teacher as she discusses the work they are to do during the session. Speaking skills are more limited for many of the children, however the stimulating environment and good teaching enable them to make good progress in their learning.
- In the Reception/Year 1 class, pupils are challenged, as they come into class, to find the answers to questions on the board. They respond well, recognising and naming the missing letters in the alphabet, 'they are all vowels'. They know that the letter 'y' can sometimes act as a vowel. Their interest and love of books; which is a strand followed throughout the school, is encouraged. They know that an author writes books, an illustrator draws the pictures and a publisher, 'sticks the books together'. They are developing their understanding of mathematics well. Most pupils can accurately double a number and confidently give the numbers which, added together, make 10 or 20.
- A Year 2 pupil reads confidently, corrects the few mistakes she makes and uses letter sounds to read unfamiliar words. Many pupils show that the skills they have acquired from the 'Jolly Phonics' scheme are helping them to develop good reading skills. A group discuss the way that jelly sets. They recognise that to test the results fairly they must only change one aspect of the experiment. They therefore use the same amount of jelly and water in the same size dishes, but put them to set in different parts of the room. Most of the group predict accurately that the jelly in the fridge will set quickest!
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are being introduced to 'silent' letters. They offer good explanations as to why they might have happened. Understand that they were once pronounced but, because speech develops, they have been dropped. They are developing their skills with number and give combinations of numbers to make 100 and then 1000. They can use letters and numbers to identify a position on a grid and use this skill when looking at maps in geography.
- The high expectations of teachers, the very good relationships and the very good attitudes to work, mean that pupils gain the maximum benefit from the well planned lessons. By the time they reach the oldest class they are tackling work of a high standard with confidence. Year 5 and 6 pupils recognise features of English such as alliteration, 'dusk descended', they have a good understanding of the meaning of words, 'similarities is opposite of contrasts'. They add clauses to simple sentences to make more interesting complex sentences. They use language well to create atmosphere and tension, 'the land was being devoured by darkness'. They ask and answer questions sensibly, and can put themselves into the role of others, such as when they ask questions of Roald Dahl about his life. They have developed good skills in mental

mathematics quickly identifying one quarter of six or one tenth of 37. They use calculators accurately to convert fractions to decimals and put series of decimals such as 0.9, 0.09 and 0.979 in order of size. They have studied scientific topics such as 'Forces' and use a force meter to measure the strength of a pull in 'Newton's'.

**The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is well supported by a very hard working staff.**

- The headteacher is very clear in the kind of school he wants, and the way this should be achieved. His priorities are to appoint the best people for the jobs they are to do, to give them good support and training so they know what is expected of them, and then to monitor the work they do. He values the contributions of all members of the school community and communicates this very well. All staff respond well to this. He recognises that the pupils come from a variety of backgrounds and has successfully integrated the different groups. He has earned the respect and support of parents, largely because of his open and welcoming management style. They have great confidence in him. School governors are clear about the quality of leadership in school and how this has contributed to the high standards of attainment and behaviour.
- The headteacher and staff know their pupils well. They recognise the different talents and needs and cater for them well. Pupils in turn willingly communicate with all adults. They are confident to approach all teachers not just their class teacher, and teachers know many pupils from classes other than their own. This contributes well to the excellent relationships and the very good atmosphere in school.
- Although the staff, governors and headteacher work as a close team, there is no complacency in the school. The headteacher monitors work in classes closely, and the governors know they need to be well informed of the standards achieved by pupils. This ensures that there is a constant examination of how well the school is performing. This has had a major impact on the way the school has developed, and why standards remain so high.

**Pupils are very well behaved and have very good attitudes to the work they do. relationships, between adults and pupils and amongst pupils, are excellent.**

- The behaviour of pupils, in and out of the classroom, is always at least good, and usually very good. Attitudes to work are also of a high standard. This is largely because of the good ethos which is evident in school. It is evident that teachers, support staff and parents are all closely involved in how pupils act. Pupils themselves recognise this consistent approach and respond well to it.
- The excellent relationships are a feature of the school and contribute very well to the high standards. These good relationships are fostered from an early age. Children in the Nursery are given opportunities to decide on the activities they will do and talk about these to staff. Pupils are encouraged to respond to each other so that five- and six-year-olds automatically applaud when a child who finds numbers difficult, recognises the number seven. Pupils are interested in their work and willingly talk about what they have done and what they expect to do next. Pupils in Year 4 have discussed the plants of the rain forest and at the end of the lesson talk excitedly about the work they are to do in the afternoon.

- A feature of the school is the way that pupils of different ages relate so well to one another. This can be on an informal basis, such as at playtime when older pupils organise games for younger ones. Parents comment on the way older pupils welcome younger ones as they come into the playground. Some more formal activities encourage this co-operation. Year 6 pupils are 'Reading Buddies' with pupils from the Reception class. This arrangement works very well. Older pupils listen carefully to the younger ones read, but take over when needed and read to their 'buddy'.

**Pupils are taught well and their personal development is very well promoted.**

- Throughout the school, the excellent relationships and mutual respect between teachers and pupils underpin the good and very good teaching seen in almost all lessons. Teachers plan their lessons well and pupils are clear about what they are to learn. Teachers ask challenging questions which make pupils think carefully about the work they do. Most lessons are presented with good pace which maintains pupils' interest and concentration. Teachers obviously enjoy teaching and their enthusiasm is shared by pupils. The very good assessment systems and teachers' high expectations lead to individuals often being given challenging individual targets to achieve, particularly in English and mathematics lessons.
- One teacher's infectious enthusiasm and good subject knowledge of the teaching of letter sounds is shown to very good effect in a lesson for Reception and Year 1 pupils. They are using 'Jolly Phonics' which link actions with the sounds letters make. The very lively teaching creates an exciting, busy atmosphere in the classroom in which the well-prepared support staff play their full part. The teacher uses a good range of resources to re-inforce pupils' learning. After they have looked at a 'Word Wheel' to add letters to the beginning of 'ill', such as 'hill' and 'pill'; they speak the lines of poems which have rhyming words.
- A very good dance lesson for pupils in Year 4/5, shows the value of the outstanding relationships in school. Pupils are asked to work in pairs, in groups and as a class, creating a sequence in which 'hunters' and 'animals' dance to lively music. Because of the very well planned work and the good balance between pupil activity and teacher demonstration, the lesson is very successful. The challenge is accepted by all pupils and the very good encouragement and advice from the teacher helps them to develop their understanding of dance movements.
- In an outstanding literacy lesson for the oldest pupils, the teacher's expertise in the use of the Literacy Strategy is evident. A well-chosen passage, from the autobiography of Roald Dahl, captures pupils' interests. The teacher uses her good subject knowledge well, encouraging pupils to study words, phrases and sentences carefully. The class is managed very well, a mix of spoken, written and reading activities maintains the pupils' high levels of concentration. When pupils are completing the challenging writing activities, they are also looking at their individual targets. These targets, 'to try to use a wider range of sentence connectives ....', are carefully chosen by the teacher to revise previous work or move individuals forward. The combination of many aspects of high quality teaching provides pupils with a rich language experience, which not only increases their knowledge but also makes them look forward to the work they are to do in the future.

**The school has excellent relationships with pupils' parents. parents have great confidence in the school.**

- The response from the answers to the Parents' Questionnaires and the Parents' Meeting are very positive. The key to this feature of the school is the way the school involves parents in all aspects of school life and their children's education. Parents are kept very well informed. This contact may be of a formal nature such as the personal organiser provided for all Key Stage 2 pupils. This document is taken to all lessons and the information which teachers need parents to know, such as the week's homework, is written into the appropriate section. The document is also used by parents to give information to teachers. The organiser is a useful working document, pupils understand that their teachers and parents are involved in their education. Contact may be of a more informal nature. Parents are sure that if there is a problem in school they will be informed as soon as possible, usually when picking their children up at home-time. They are also confident that if they come into school with a concern they will be welcomed and listened to. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- Many pupils come to the school from outside the immediate area. Their parents have chosen the school for its qualities rather than its distance from their home. Other parents talk about moving their children to this school because of the work they see pupils doing when visiting friends. Parents have great confidence in the school and the headteacher.

#### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The over-use of commercially produced worksheets in some subjects, particularly at the top of Key Stage 1.**

- Although most of the work which pupils do is presented well, some could be better. This is usually when there is an over-reliance on commercially produced worksheets for some topic work. When this happens pupils are engaged in routine tasks which do not challenge them to the extent, for example, of their work in literacy. This results in written work being presented in a way which falls below the high standards usually seen.

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

**This is a highly effective school with high standards seen in most aspects of school life.**

- To raise standards in the way some topic work is presented, the headteacher and staff should:
  - monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of worksheets throughout the school, in particular looking at the use of commercially produced worksheets.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	44	44	6	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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	134
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	28
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	20
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	94
National comparative data	94

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	11	11	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	20	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91	95	95
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	21	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95	95	95
	National	82	86	87

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	4	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	11	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85	100	100
	National	68	69	75

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	134
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		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

*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)	6.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.9
Average class size	26.8

#### **Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	48

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	258440
Total expenditure	255658
Expenditure per pupil	1650
Balance brought forward from previous year	24374
Balance carried forward to next year	27156

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	173
Number of questionnaires returned	111

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	24	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	23	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	30	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	41	2	1	9
The teaching is good.	82	18	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	74	23	2	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	86	13	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	86	23	0	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	84	16	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	24	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	27	6	2	8