

# INSPECTION REPORT

**LISS JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Liss

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115925

Headteacher: Mr A Burford

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Woods  
21079

Dates of inspection: 1 – 2 February 2000

Inspection number: 191757

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hillbrow Road Liss Hampshire
Postcode:	GU33 7LQ
Telephone number:	01730 892292
Fax number:	01730 892292
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Pritchard
Date of previous inspection:	18 November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Mrs L Woods	Registered inspector
Mrs C Webb	Lay inspector
Mrs E Pacey	Team inspector

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Number of pupils	264		broadly average
Pupils with English as an additional language	1		low
Pupils entitled to free school meals	22	8.3%	below average
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	63	24%	broadly average
Average class size	33		

The school shares a site with the infant school, in an attractive modern building. There are very few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds in the school, which reflects its locality.

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

Liss Junior School is a very good school. It achieves very high standards within a rich and varied curriculum. Teaching is good and pupils respond very well to all the opportunities provided. The headteacher leads very well by example and has the full support of staff, governors and parents. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Pupils reach very high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils are proud of their school and are really interested in all they do.
- The school has made great strides in improving its work in information and communication technology. The excellent range of extra-curricular activities is a particularly strong feature in the very full curriculum the school provides.
- The school is very effective in providing additional sessions for pupils who need extra help, and in extending its most able mathematicians.
- All involved in the school work very well as a team creating a caring, hardworking and warm atmosphere.

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

- Planning in some lessons needs to take more account of the different ages and ability groups in each class.
- Arrangements for setting homework need clarification.
- More consistency in the content of pupils' annual reports is required.
- An evaluation of success in meeting targets could be included within the detailed school improvement plan.

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

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

The inspection in November 1996 found that Liss Junior was a good school. Since that time the school has continued to improve and it has made good progress in addressing the key issues identified in that report. The school has an impressive array of hardware to overcome the previous shortcomings in provision for information technology, and standards are rising steadily as this is put to good use. Planning has been reviewed and improved to provide a good framework for improving pupils' progress. Good opportunities exist for pupils to apply their knowledge and take initiative, particularly in information and communication technology; and for them to reflect on their feelings and ideas in lessons, particularly in religious education. The detailed school improvement plan identifies regular reviews for developing different areas of the curriculum. The school regularly reflects upon and reviews its practices and is in a good position to maintain improvement in the future.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	A	B
mathematics	B	A	A	A
science	A	A*	A	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The school has consistently achieved very high standards in English, mathematics and science over the past three years, and these have improved steadily year-on-year. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 is well above the national average in all three subjects and last year two pupils attained Level 6 in mathematics and science. Attainment at Level 5 is also above average compared with similar schools in English and mathematics, and well above average in science. In science, these results place the school in the top 5 per cent nationally. The school is proud of its results, but works continuously to improve its performance. Very good use is made of impressive assessment procedures to identify individual pupils' attainment and set challenging targets for future years. Extension groups for talented mathematicians and booster groups for pupils needing extra help are used very well to help pupils reach these targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They take a lively interest in all the opportunities provided and work hard at them. They are proud of their school and achievements, and are eager to talk about their work and successes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They move quietly and considerately around the open plan building and listen attentively in lessons and assemblies. Play outside can be exuberant but any minor incidents are accidental. In the dining room pupils queue sensibly and talk politely to each other and adults present.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils enjoy the many responsibilities they undertake, such as the school council, acting as librarians, setting out the dining room and operating the overhead projector in assemblies. The very good relationships, between pupils and adults and between the pupils themselves, create a warm atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and almost all arrive promptly in the morning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	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.*

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons seen. It was good or better in 63 per cent of lessons and very good in 13 per cent. All teachers are conscientious and hardworking, arriving early and leaving late as they plan and prepare for each day's work. The co-operation in planning and delivering a rich variety in the curriculum, within the Lower and Upper School teams, is a strength of the school. Teachers know the pupils in their classes very well. They have high expectations of them all and these, together with the positive relationships which exist in the school, result in pupils having a good work ethic and the quality of learning being good. Teachers make good use of the literacy and numeracy hours, and lessons move at a brisk pace. There is not, however, always sufficient variety in the activities provided to match fully the age and ability range within the class. In the very small proportion of lessons which were unsatisfactory, six per cent, pupils were not fully engaged in what they were doing, which slowed the pace of the lesson and limited the progress they made.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All required elements are fully in place and the school works hard to make activities interesting and relevant to the pupils. The excellent range of extra-curricular activities is a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils who need additional help are identified effectively and supported very well both in booster classes and within class lessons by dedicated and hardworking teaching and non-teaching staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who have English as an additional language are bilingual. Teachers, however, are careful to ensure they understand the work provided.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the last inspection with good opportunities for reflection being provided during assemblies and in some lessons. Provision for moral development is good, promoted effectively by the well-developed code of behaviour within the school and the good example set by all adults. Social development is very good. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility and carry these out well. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils develop a sound awareness of features of their own and other cultures through occasions such as visiting authors and artists and visits to places of interest.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school has a very clear and detailed knowledge and understanding of the needs of all its pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very caring and committed leadership. He has a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in the school through formal and informal systems for monitoring these. The Lower and Upper School co-ordinators manage their roles very effectively to ensure the smooth-running of the school. Subject co-ordinators provide good support for their colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are well informed and bring a good degree of expertise to the school. They take a keen, practical interest in, and have a thorough knowledge of, the work of the school through the efforts of their committees and regular personal visits.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Assessment procedures are impressive. Progress towards targets in the school improvement plan is regularly considered and evaluated by the headteacher and governors.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. All decisions relating to the school are considered carefully, using the principles of best value. All specific grants are spent appropriately and the apparently high income includes money collected for residential trips. Money carried forward is sensibly allocated to preserving staffing levels whilst changes in the pupil population are evaluated.

## 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>• Children like coming to school, behave well and make good progress.</li> <li>• Standards are very good and the range of activities is excellent.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed, and treats their concerns seriously and sympathetically.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about the progress their children are making.</li> <li>• Clarification about homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors fully support parents' positive views about the school. They agree that homework needs clarification. The school has monthly 'drop in' days for parents to visit the school and see how their children are doing. It acknowledges, however, that working parents may find it difficult to attend these. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of its annual reports for pupils, and is continuing to review these.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Pupils reach very high standards in English, mathematics and science.**

The school's commitment to high standards in English, mathematics and science is clearly successful, evident both from its results in the standard assessment tasks and seen in many lessons. Pupils speak clearly and confidently and express themselves well when talking to each other, adults and during lessons. In religious education, for example, they use a good range of vocabulary to express how they think Abraham felt when told to sacrifice Isaac, such as 'shocked', 'surprised' and 'tense'. This also appears to very good effect when writing, for example, their own expressive Haiku poems, leaflets discussing the reform of the circus or posters to debate the development of Antarctica. Extended writing supports work well in other subjects, such as history. Work is well presented and spelt correctly, showing that the pupils take a pride in what they do. 'Scribe awards' contribute effectively to neat, legible handwriting throughout the school. Pupils use the library confidently, and they thoroughly enjoy reading and researching.

Pupils are very competent at both mental and written calculations. They enjoy mathematics and confidently explain how they have arrived at answers; 'You can do it in your head and then work out how to write it on paper'. Pupils have a good understanding of number relationships and use these successfully, for example when working out easier ways to add a series of numbers. They develop a detailed mathematical vocabulary and clearly understand the terms they use, for example, when describing fractions. They enjoy applying their mathematical knowledge to 'real life' situations, such as working out shopping bills from a market stall.

Standards in the national tests for science are very high, with a significant minority of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 and one attaining Level 6. The school's results place it in the top 5 per cent in the country. Science was not on the timetable for the Upper School on the two days of the inspection, but pupils in the Lower School were very interested in examining a range of soil samples to discover similarities and differences in their composition. They discussed their observations intelligently as they worked, and handled the samples and equipment sensibly and safely. Pupils' work from the Upper School shows that they gain a very high level of in-depth knowledge of the main aspects of science in the National Curriculum. Much of this work, though, is based on worksheets, and there was less evidence of pupils designing and carrying out their own investigations and experiments in science.

#### **Pupils are proud of their school and are really interested in all they do.**

Pupils would confidently recommend their school to others; 'It is a good school, nice teachers and good friends.' They are articulate, polite and interested, and have a strong sense of responsibility and natural justice. Almost all pupils arrive promptly in the morning and settle quickly and sensibly to their morning tasks. They pay close attention in lessons and greet many activities, for example, a bingo game in a mathematics lesson, with a cheer of enthusiasm. Younger pupils proudly parade in front of their friends, wearing mediaeval costumes. Older pupils act out, and create frozen pictures from, the story of Abraham with serious concentration. All pupils are pleased when their friends do well, for example, applauding good performance in physical education.

Pupils behave very well. In assemblies, they listen attentively and reverently to the stories. They thoroughly understand the school's rules and routines, and move sensibly and purposefully around the school. In the playground play can be exuberant, but any minor incidents are accidental. Pupils talk quietly and politely, to each other and adults, in the dining room. They enjoy the many responsibilities they undertake. The school council, for example, debates issues relating to school improvement, such as seating and playground markings, with serious attention. Members take responsibility for reporting back the results of their debates to their class and the rest of the school. Librarians keep the library tidy and oversee the ticketing of books, many of which show signs of frequent use.

**The school has made great strides in improving its work in information and communication technology. The excellent range of extra-curricular activities is a particularly strong feature in the very full curriculum the school provides.**

Addressing the shortcomings in the provision for information technology, in order to raise standards, was a key issue in the previous inspection report. The school's success in doing this is clearly evident. The range of hardware, some of which is networked and linked to the Internet, allows effective 'hands-on' experience for pupils in their weekly lessons. In addition, pupils use the computers extensively during breaks and lunchtimes, and to support work during other lessons. In an art lesson, for example, Lower School pupils used a drawing program to design castles which others in the class were doing on paper. Other work shows data handling, with two- and three-dimensional graphs recording the results of bread surveys in design and technology. A digital camera is used to provide an interesting record of pupils working. Both Lower and Upper School pupils access the Internet to research information. Younger pupils are carefully guided in this, but older pupils use their initiative well to find out information on topics which interest them. Word processing skills are developed well as Upper School pupils experiment with changing font and colour to enhance the meaning of a poem. Standards are in line with national expectations and clear plans for further development of the subject are in place.

The curriculum includes all of the required elements; it is broad, well balanced and a strength of the school. Teachers work hard to make the work interesting and relevant and ensure that all pupils have similar experiences. The excellent range of clubs, reported by the previous inspection, remains a strong feature of the breadth of experiences provided. Teachers, parents and other adults give freely of their time to encompass a wide range of interests from sport and music to French, nature, drama and cookery. Pupils from all year groups enjoyed the energetic line dancing, and inspectors enjoyed the delicious scones from the cookery club!

**The school is very effective in providing additional sessions for pupils who need extra help, and in extending its most able mathematicians.**

The school has impressive arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress. These are used very effectively to identify both those pupils who need extra help with literacy and numeracy, and those who would benefit from additional challenge in mathematics. In the Lower School, staff providing additional literacy support work closely with their groups, following the same planning as the rest of the class. This concentrated attention, coupled with the high expectations shared by all staff, results in the quality of learning and pupils' progress being good during these sessions.

In the Upper School, the booster classes in English and mathematics are valued by the pupils. 'They are fun and it helps' was one positive remark. The small group sizes mean teachers provide focused attention closely matched to pupils' needs. In an English session, pupils found the comprehension questions quite difficult, but they responded well

to the challenge. They helped each other readily, without copying. In the mathematics sessions, pupils worked with interest and concentration to complete their work on fractions, designed to reinforce the current topic. In one group some pupils were so keen to answer they did not give themselves time to think. This was sympathetically corrected by the teacher, who encouraged a proper approach to solving the problem using practical apparatus. The good relationships and high expectations in each session are very effective and instrumental in raising standards.

Older pupils enjoy their extension mathematics. They explain what they have done enthusiastically, such as working out the square root of a number using trial and improvement with a calculator. They show impressive confidence in handling numbers and mathematical formulae, although one pupil 'prefers class lessons because they are easier!' The work is planned effectively to raise levels of attainment for both Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, although it is not always possible to match this to the current class topic.

**All involved in the school work very well as a team creating a caring, hardworking and warm atmosphere.**

The school has a very good ethos, with a strong commitment to high standards and an effective learning environment. All staff work hard to provide a rich range of experiences for the pupils, arriving early and leaving late as they plan and prepare for each day's work. Within the Lower and Upper School teams, the co-operation in planning and providing this variety in the curriculum is a strength of the school. Specific expertise is shared effectively, for example, in information and communication technology by the headteacher, as are the successes of individual lessons and ideas for further development.

Relationships throughout the school are very good. Teachers provide good role models for the pupils in their respect for each other, and know the individual needs of pupils in their classes very well. Pupils are confident that their feelings and views will be sympathetically acknowledged, and an atmosphere of mutual trust supports the quality of learning well. This positive ethos is supported and maintained by all who work in the school.

The leadership of the school is very effective in promoting and maintaining this ethos. The headteacher leads very well by example, and he has a clear handle on the quality of teaching and learning through practical involvement on a daily basis, as well as through formal systems for monitoring these. The governing body is well informed and brings a good degree of expertise to the school. Governors take a keen, practical interest in the work of the school, through the work of its committees and regular personal visits.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Planning in some lessons needs to take more account of the different ages and ability groups in each class.**

The school is making good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to add more 'rigour' to the curriculum in English and mathematics, increase pupils' progress and raise standards even further. The comprehensive planning within the Lower and Upper School teams is very effective in ensuring that pupils of the same age in different classes have similar experiences. Additionally, teachers are very careful to make sure that the work in the booster classes is linked closely to the work going on in the rest of the class. This also happens in the Upper School mathematics extension group as far as possible. In mathematics lessons, different work within the current topic is provided for less able or younger pupils, but extension work, for pupils who are confident with the fundamental principles involved, is less apparent. Upper School pupils really enjoyed the challenge of working out, for example, the fraction of the school's windows in their classroom, presented on an imaginative extension sheet on the second day of the inspection. In the English lessons seen, however, all pupils worked on the same task. This lack of planned activities for the different ages and abilities within each class has a limiting impact on the quality of learning for some pupils. Without a particular focus or challenge for the older and more able pupils, the progressive development of their skills is limited. The impact of this continues, particularly for the younger pupils, in the second year they spend in the mixed-year classes. One pupil reported 'It was great in Year 3, because if you are bright you work with Year 4.' When asked what happened in Year 4, it was 'not so good'.

### **Arrangements for setting homework need clarification.**

Homework is set nightly for all pupils and is marked consistently. It is carefully matched to work in class, often to prepare pupils for subsequent lessons, and makes an important contribution to the quality of learning. Pupils appreciate the value of homework and say they have between 20 and 40 minutes each night. Some, who during the week have up to five extra activities after school, 'have trouble fitting it in!' There is some justification for the significant minority of parents who are concerned about homework. Younger pupils are not always clear about what they are expected to do, particularly if they do not write it down in their homework book. The school is aware of this and has already begun investigating how to make this easier. In many classes, however, the work set is the same for all pupils, with the expectation only that older and more able pupils will write at greater length. They would benefit from an extra dimension to add challenge and interest to the work they do at home.

### **More consistency in the content of pupils' annual reports is required.**

The school has worked hard to improve the quality of its annual reports for pupils. Its continuing commitment to improving these included a valuable survey of parental views following those issued last year. In the current format, all annual reports are comprehensive. They contain useful detail about what the class has done during the year and the individual achievements of the pupils. The best reports set targets for improvement in the following year, particularly in English, mathematics and science, but not all do this. As a result they do not always provide parents with a clear picture of where or how their children could make more progress. In their responses to the questionnaire, 33 per cent of parents did not feel well informed about progress. Additionally, a minority of reports are over-dependent on computer generated phrases, and in some cases, in the foundation subjects, the same text appears for different pupils in the class.

## **An evaluation of success in meeting targets could be included within the detailed school improvement plan.**

The school improvement plan is a detailed document. It includes an impressive analysis of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics, in order to set targets for achievement in the standard assessment tasks in these subjects. It provides a useful three-year overview, identifying areas for improvement in issues relating to the community, curriculum, governors and parents. Tasks, action, success criteria, time-scales, responsibility, cost and review are all included. Responsibility for monitoring progress is identified, and governors' committees take an active part in this. However, apart from a detailed breakdown of the literacy action plan for the spring term, an evaluation of progress, as a result of monitoring, is not included. Minutes of governors' meetings show a detailed discussion of the work of the school and regular reports from the headteacher and committees. These could usefully be included in the improvement plan, to enable the school to see clearly how well it is meeting its targets.

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

The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- review lesson planning in order to ensure the activities provided take more account of the different ages and ability groups in each class;
- clarify arrangements for setting homework so that pupils are confident about what they are expected to do;
- review consistency in the content of pupils' annual reports;
- consider including an evaluation of success in meeting targets within the detailed school improvement plan in order to make monitoring of progress towards these targets easier.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
	13	50	31	6		

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	Y3-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	264
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	63

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	30	34	64

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
	Boys	25	26	28
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Girls	33	31	33
	Total	58	57	61
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	91	89	95
	National	70	69	78

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
	Boys	25	26	27
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Girls	33	31	33
	Total	58	57	60
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	91	89	94
	National	68	69	75

### **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	2
White	262
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3-Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	33

#### **Education support staff: Y3-Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	86

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998 / 99
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	£
Total income	445 953
Total expenditure	426 613
Expenditure per pupil	1 700
Balance brought forward from previous year	15 396
Balance carried forward to next year	34 736

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	264
Number of questionnaires returned	96
Percentage returned	36

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	39	9	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	30	54	6	4	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	68	8	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	61	20	2	3
The teaching is good.	30	60	6	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	17	50	30	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	34	11	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	52	1	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	25	53	19	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	33	56	4	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	56	6	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	55	1	0	0