

INSPECTION REPORT

UPMINSTER JUNIOR SCHOOL

Upminster

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102306

Headteacher: Mr. D. Donoghue

Reporting inspector: Mrs. M.S. Summers
25455

Dates of inspection: 16-17 January 2001

Inspection number: 192154

Short 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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St. Mary's Lane Upminster Essex
Postcode:	RM14 3BS
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. D. Carney
Date of previous inspection:	24 February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Upminster Junior School caters for pupils between the ages of seven and eleven. There are 385 pupils on roll, which makes it larger than most other junior schools. It is situated in the heart of the town and most pupils come from the immediate area, transferring from the infant school which shares the same site. The percentage of families entitled to free school meals is much below average. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs, 15 per cent, is lower than average as is the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need. The school has 41 more boys than girls and this imbalance is particularly noticeable in Year 4. Seventeen pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is average for schools in the area and 11 of these pupils speak English as an additional language, although the vast majority are fluent. Pupils enter the school at above average levels of attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. The high quality of leadership and management and the good nature of the teaching which the pupils receive result in a strong commitment to high standards. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- High quality teaching enables pupils to make good progress and reach high standards in mathematics and science, information and communication technology and music.
- The school promotes hard work and high achievement and this means that pupils are eager to learn and do their best.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher, the effective management of the deputy and year group heads and the good support of governors ensure that high standards are valued and that the school continues to improve.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for lower attaining pupils is very well organised and this helps them make very good progress.

What could be improved

- Although there has been much improvement in recent years, still more pupils should reach high standards in writing in the national tests for 11 year olds.
- Pupils are not prepared well enough for life in a multicultural society.

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 made good improvement since its last inspection in February 1997 and looks likely to continue to improve in the future. The high standards achieved in national tests have been maintained and more pupils are reaching high levels in mathematics than before, although the number of pupils reaching high levels in English is only average when compared with similar schools. The quality of teaching continues to be good, with more lessons judged to be excellent or very good during this inspection. The key issues for action identified by the last inspection have, overall, been well addressed; for example, the weak provision for information and communication technology is now very good and standards in the subject are now well above average. Policies for the curriculum and child protection are now in place and parents are given clear information about their children's progress. However, although resources to support multicultural education have been increased, the school is not yet using these well enough to develop pupils' understanding of life in a multicultural society.

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	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	B	A	C	well above A average above B average
mathematics	A	A	A	B	average C below average D well below E average
science	A	A	A	B	

The findings of this inspection agree with the school's test results and judge standards in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, and science to be well above average compared with all schools. The school sets demanding targets to maintain or improve standards and these were met in the most recent tests. In English, although far more pupils reached high levels than in 1999, there is still room for improvement, particularly in writing. In mathematics, a good number of pupils are working at high levels and look likely to achieve well above average standards again this year. More pupils look likely to achieve Level 6 in mathematics, which is above the national expectations for pupils of their age. In science, over half the pupils reached higher than average levels in the tests last year. Although boys have done better than girls in the tests over the last three years, girls are on line to reach similar standards this year. Pupils do very well in information and communication technology and music because these subjects have a high profile in the school, and are well taught.

Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and reach high standards for their capabilities. Most achieve national standards in the tests. Higher achieving and gifted and talented pupils also make good progress overall, although some reach insufficiently high standards in writing.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils come to school ready and willing to learn and work extremely hard in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in class, in assembly, in the dining hall, in the playground and when moving around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils work well together, share books and equipment willingly and accept responsibility with enthusiasm.
Attendance	Very good.

Pupils' very good behaviour, their enthusiasm for learning and their good relationships with one another all contribute to the high standards which they reach.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	n/a	n/a	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 and learning was very good or excellent in 29 per cent of the lessons observed during the inspection, good in 34 per cent and satisfactory in 29 per cent. Eight per cent were judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching is particularly good in mathematics, including numeracy, science, information and communication technology and music and this enables pupils to make good progress and reach high standards. Teachers have very sound understanding of these subjects and plan their lessons well, providing a good balance of instruction and explanation, question and answer sessions and activities, which interest the pupils and motivate them to do their best. They move through the lessons at a considerable pace, continually challenging the pupils to achieve more and this means that pupils complete a lot of work and gain a real sense of achievement. Teachers have high expectations of the standards of work and behaviour that they expect in lessons and pupils respond readily to these, showing high levels of motivation and concentration. In English, although reading and writing skills are taught well, teachers depend too heavily on published schemes and worksheets and give pupils insufficient opportunities to write at length and put their knowledge and skills together. In the very small number of lessons in other subjects where the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory, this was due to poor lesson preparation or dull presentation.

Pupils are set for English and mathematics and this enables teachers to pitch lessons at appropriate levels for the pupils. Generally, higher attaining pupils receive suitable work although they could be challenged more in English. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, both by their class teachers and by support teachers, who provide carefully structured work to help them achieve their individual targets. Teaching assistants are always very well deployed and make a considerable contribution to the learning of these pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well organised and a wide range of visits makes learning more meaningful and enjoyable for the pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Procedures for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are fully in place and they have very good access to the school's curriculum. They make very good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Teachers ensure that these pupils take a full part in all lessons and help them if they have difficulty in understanding new vocabulary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very strong moral and social values are encouraged through the good examples set by adults in the school and through assemblies and lessons. There is insufficient emphasis on teaching pupils about the wide range of cultures in Britain today.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Adults in the school have very good relationships with pupils and know them well which enables them to care for them effectively. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are not yet in place.

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents who are generally supportive of its work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives the school very clear and purposeful leadership and is ably supported by his deputy. Year group heads manage their teams well, providing a very effective management structure.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors take an active role in monitoring the premises, the school's finances and the curriculum. This gives them a good knowledge of the school and enables them to plan effectively for the future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors the results of national tests to see how well they are doing but is not analysing pupils' performance in English to identify and address weaknesses to improve standards further. The quality of teaching and support is monitored regularly and feedback given to enable teachers and their assistants to improve their performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school's resources are used very well to promote pupils' learning. Improvements to the premises, for example, the new computer suite, and the curriculum are carefully costed and governors receive regular reports on school development..

The school has made great improvements in recent years to its accommodation but classrooms remain very small for the numbers of children in them. However, the staff work hard to ensure that the cramped conditions do not affect the quality of children's learning. The school applies the principles of best value effectively, although it recognises the need to take the views of parents and pupils more fully into account when planning for development.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children are making good progress. • The behaviour in the school is good. • The teaching is good. • The school expects their children to work hard. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • The high standard of the annual reports of pupils' progress. • The range of visits arranged to support their children's learning • Provision for music in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework children receive. • More parents' evenings and information about their children's progress. • Some parents do not feel comfortable approaching the school with a concern. • The school does not work closely enough with parents. • The leadership and management of the school. • The range of activities provided for children outside school time. • A few teachers use sarcasm to manage their pupils and this affects children's self-esteem.

The findings of the inspection support parents' positive views. Homework is appropriate, although some children do not take homework diaries home to be signed by parents. There are enough parents' evenings and individual appointments can be made to see children's work and discuss progress with the teacher if required. The school works very closely with parents of pupils with

special educational needs and, during the inspection, many parents were noted in school in the morning and during the school day, sharing concerns or information with staff.

Leadership and management are good and promote the good progress of pupils. However, some communications with parents lack sensitivity in the wording. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, although these are limited to sport and music. No use of sarcasm by teachers was noted during the inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

High quality teaching enables pupils to make good progress and reach high standards in mathematics and science, information and communication technology and music.

1. Teachers have a very firm understanding of these subjects, which enables them to present their lessons in an interesting manner. They start with good introductions, quickly gaining their pupils' attention by asking questions which remind them about previous lessons. They often tell pupils what they expect them to learn from the lesson and this helps them focus on the task in hand and motivates them to do their best. For example, in an excellent lesson in the computer suite for a Year 5 class, the teacher involved all the pupils during the introduction by questioning them about work they had done previously on spreadsheets. Through the discussion, he was able to remind them of relevant vocabulary, such as "icons" and "cells" and was able to assess which pupils had remembered how to enter information on to the spreadsheet. The teacher's clear demonstration and explanations meant that the pupils could see exactly what they had to do to complete the task.

2. Teachers involve pupils in a good range of practical activities which enable them to practise what they have learned so that it becomes secure in their minds. For example, in a very good science lesson in Year 4, the teacher provided pupils with a range of equipment and materials to design a switch for an electric circuit. The lesson built on the pupils' previous knowledge of electricity and they responded very well to the new challenge. They discovered different methods of making a switch and used their knowledge of conductors and insulators to select appropriate materials. In another very good lesson in mathematics in Year 6, the pupils compared the costs of a range of items in different countries. They had to calculate the costs based upon the current exchange rates and discovered, for example, that a particular doll was much cheaper in Austria than it was in Britain. They learned how to select the appropriate information about exchange rates, which number operations to use and how to use estimation to help them check whether their answer was correct.

3. Skilled question and answer sessions by teachers help pupils to understand new concepts. In a Year 5 religious education lesson on Jesus' parables, the teacher carefully guided her pupils towards thinking about the true meaning of the story 'The Good Samaritan'. She asked them to think of how they might help someone in a similar situation. By the end of the lesson the pupils had a good idea of the purpose of parables and had also considered the lessons to be learned from the story.

4. Teachers have very high expectations of how much their pupils can achieve. They expect them to listen carefully, work hard and complete a large amount of work during the lesson. Good planning ensures that lessons move at a considerable pace, although enough time is given for pupils to practise new skills they have learned. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well by providing carefully structured work which helps them move towards their individual targets. In an excellent music lesson in Year 3, the teacher moved quickly through an introduction which reminded pupils about their previous work on tempo and rhythm, explained how to record their compositions using simple notation and set up practical activities to teach pupils how to combine different rhythms. She set up a range of challenges which extended both the lower and higher achieving children and all pupils made excellent progress during the lesson.

5. Teachers plan the work of support assistants well and these members of staff have a considerable effect on the learning of a great many pupils. They support pupils with special educational needs very well, helping them to concentrate during lessons and encouraging them to respond during class discussions. Teachers use these staff particularly well in the computer suite, where a technician is always on hand to support the lesson and additional support assistants help pupils work through their tasks. There are often three or four adults to support information and communication technology lessons and this is one of the reasons why pupils are making such good progress in the subject and achieving high standards.

6. All these factors have a positive effect upon the quality of pupils' learning and enable them to make good progress as they move through the school.

The school promotes hard work and high achievement and this means that pupils are eager to learn and do their best.

7. The school is well known within the community for its commitment to high standards, in both pupils' work and their behaviour. Parents choose to send their children to the school because of these values and say they are extremely pleased with the standards which their children achieve. Pupils come to school ready and keen to learn and waste little time getting ready for lessons or in idle chatter or misbehaviour.

8. The good examples of all adults in the school have a great influence on pupils' attitudes to their work. Teachers and support staff have excellent relationships with one another, work hard at planning lessons which interest the pupils and are always ready to recognise and praise pupils' efforts. Discussions with pupils show that they greatly appreciate the efforts of their teachers.

9. Teachers' warm relationships with their pupils means that pupils are not afraid to make mistakes. They are eager to respond to their teachers' questions and greatly value their advice and opinions. They feel comfortable asking for help if required. One Year 4 pupil described how she was having difficulty with some mathematics work and how her teacher had spent a great deal of time explaining it again so that she could understand.

10. The school sets pupils individual targets to achieve and this system also promotes good effort. Parents are informed of these and are involved with their child and the teacher in assessing how well the targets have been achieved.

11. The school's system of house points to recognise hard work and good behaviour also encourages pupils to try their best. Their efforts are recognised through certificates awarded during the school's celebration assembly each Friday. Pupils are extremely proud of their achievements and ready to celebrate the success of others.

The strong leadership of the headteacher, the effective management of the deputy and year group heads and the good support of governors ensure that high standards are valued and that the school continues to improve.

12. The headteacher has clear values and ideals which he shares effectively with his staff. These, coupled with excellent support from his deputy and effective management of year group heads, result in a strong commitment towards enabling every child to reach high academic and personal standards. Joint planning is co-ordinated by year group heads and ensures that pupils in each class of a similar age receive the same experiences. The positive role models provided by the headteacher and senior managers encourage pupils' respect and they respond favourably to any advice and suggestions offered. Pupils feel confident enough to share their ideas and opinions and the school has plans to take their views and those of their parents into account more fully when planning for school development.

13. Much work has been done to monitor the standards achieved in the national tests each year and the school has been particularly vigilant in tracking boys' and girls' achievement. This was because over the last three years boys had performed better than girls. This year however, boys and girls are expected to reach similar standards and the school has concluded that annual results are dependent upon the capabilities of the particular pupils in Year 6 each year.

14. Subject co-ordinators have had a considerable effect upon raising standards in the school in, for example, mathematics and information and communication. In these subjects, clear analysis of progress and good action planning have ensured that pupils make very good progress and reach high standards.

15. The headteacher and staff work well with governors to ensure that they receive relevant information about all aspects of the school which enables them to monitor development and standards. Subject coordinators make regular presentations to governors to inform them how subjects are taught. Governors on the premises committee take an active role in monitoring the state of the buildings and how they can make them better to improve teaching and learning. The finance committee monitors spending regularly to ensure that it is within their budget plans. Careful planning has resulted in a great many improvements to the building in recent years, for example the computer suite. This has helped pupils to reach high standards in the subject. Excellent information is provided by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator so that governors can monitor the service the school is providing for these pupils and how effective it is.

16. The positive working relationship between the headteacher, staff and governors contributes to the effective leadership and management of the school and ultimately to the high standards which pupils reach.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for lower attaining pupils is very well organised and this helps them make very good progress.

17. The care and attention which these pupils receive help them to make very good progress and the vast majority achieve national standards by the time they leave the school.

18. Good liaison procedures with the infant school ensures that relevant information is received when pupils transfer and that little time is wasted in providing effectively for pupils' needs. Clear systems ensure that any new child with special educational needs is identified quickly and the necessary provision made.

19. Parents are fully involved in working with the school to help their children and attend regular meetings to assess progress and to decide on new targets for improvement. The documentation is of a very high standard and shows clearly what is expected of pupils, parents, teachers and support assistants. Outside specialists are used well to advise on specific matters, for example how to support particular children with behaviour difficulties.

20. The pupils split into ability sets for English and mathematics and good staffing levels enable an extra set to be formed to cater for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers ensure that the pupils receive carefully structured work which helps them to make very good progress in these subjects.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Not enough pupils are reaching high standards in writing in the national tests for 11 year olds.

21. Although the standards reached in English in national tests are well above average when compared with all schools, when compared with schools in similar circumstances, they are only average. This is because insufficient pupils are reaching high standards in their writing.

22. Analysis of pupils' work in English and observation of lessons shows that pupils are gaining a firm grasp of the different skills required for effective writing, for example spelling patterns and how to use punctuation correctly, but that they do not have enough opportunities to use all these skills together in extended pieces of writing. There is a variety of different published schemes available for teachers to use when planning their lessons, but too many worksheets are used, which limits pupils' opportunities to write at length. Because of these limitations, teachers are unable to identify weaknesses in pupils' work and give pupils clear information about what they need to do to improve. This is evident in pupils' books, where many teachers are giving insufficient feedback to pupils in their marking.

23. Planning for the subject's development has focused upon a range of areas, including the use of information and communication technology within the subject. However, the plans have not

been directly concerned with improving standards of pupils' attainment. Test results and pupils' work have not been scrutinised carefully enough to identify which aspects could be improved and plans then made to develop the curriculum to meet these weaknesses.

24. Some monitoring of English teaching has been undertaken but this has been very general and not focused enough upon how the provision is affecting standards.

Pupils are not prepared well enough for life in a multicultural society.

25. The last inspection identified weaknesses in the school's provision for multicultural education, and, although resources have been improved, this remains an area for improvement.

26. There are now more books throughout the school representing a range of cultural backgrounds, although there are no dual language books in the library to raise pupils' awareness of and respect for other languages. The range of musical instruments representing other cultures is good and pupils use these in lessons, learning about music from other countries. However, instruments are stored in the music room which is outside the main school building, so are not on display in a prominent area to gain pupils' attention and sustain their interest.

27. Generally, throughout the school, there are very limited posters, pictures, objects or pupils' work on display which reflect the diversity of cultures in Britain today. Teachers' planning shows little emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding through different subjects. Although pupils learn about religious festivals, for example in Judaism and Sikhism, opportunities are missed to emphasise these in assemblies and to illustrate them through relevant music and stories.

28. A few parents representing the different cultures of pupils in the school have contributed to lessons such as food technology, but this is not encouraged enough to ensure that pupils value and respect one another's cultural backgrounds.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:

(1) **Ensure more pupils reach high standards in the national tests for 11 year olds by:**

- giving pupils more opportunities to write at length;
- ensuring that teachers give careful attention to marking pupils' work so that areas for improvement can be highlighted and effective feedback given to pupils;
- analysing test results more carefully and planning curriculum developments to address weaknesses in provision;
- monitoring curriculum development carefully to see how it is improving provision in the classroom and its effects on standards.

(2) **Prepare pupils more fully for living within a multicultural society by:**

- ensuring that the work that teachers plan in different subjects reflects a range of cultures;
- mounting more multicultural displays throughout the school;
- highlighting aspects of multicultural education more effectively through assemblies;
- involving pupils from different cultures and their parents more effectively to support the curriculum.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

24

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	21	33	29	8	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		385
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		57

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	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	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.2

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 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	64	56	120

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	60	60	62
	Girls	50	48	51
	Total	110	108	113
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92(92)	90(90)	94(97)
	National	75(70)	72(69)	85(78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	55	59	58
	Girls	44	47	47
	Total	99	106	105
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83(83)	89(91)	88(92)
	National	70(68)	72(69)	80(75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	3
Indian	3
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	2
White	369
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	32

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	123.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	755,499
Total expenditure	798,589
Expenditure per pupil	1934
Balance brought forward from previous year	68,728
Balance carried forward to next year	24,299

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	385
Number of questionnaires returned	102

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	42	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	31	61	3	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	55	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	61	13	3	2
The teaching is good.	34	60	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	11	46	37	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	27	49	20	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	51	0	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	9	43	41	5	2
The school is well led and managed.	22	51	16	4	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	60	4	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	29	34	14	12

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents raised concerns about how some teachers used sarcasm to manage their pupils. They felt that such comments were inappropriate and affected pupils' self esteem.