

INSPECTION REPORT

BEDWORTH HEATH NURSERY SCHOOL

Bedworth Heath

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125486

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Jones

Reporting inspector: Mrs M E Hamby
20498

Dates of inspection: 17th – 18th January 2001

Inspection number: 194001

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	LEA Nursery school
Age range of pupils:	3 - 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Glebe Avenue Bedworth Heath Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV12 0DP
Telephone number:	02476 364188
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor Ian Lloyd
Date of previous inspection:	12 - 14 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
20498	Mrs Mary Hamby	Registered inspector
14083	Mr Andy Anderson	Lay inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Hugh Protherough Inspections Ltd.

PO Box 396
Banbury
OX15 5XJ

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	12
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	13
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	14

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bedworth Heath nursery school is situated in a residential area close to shops and other amenities. Most of the children live in the immediate area, which comprises a mixture of privately owned and local authority housing. The school offers places to children for a year, from the September after their third birthday. Very few children either join the nursery mid-year or leave before the end of the summer term. All the children attend part-time. Currently, there are 40 boys and 36 girls on roll, of whom 32 are already four years of age. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority heritages, and all speak English. The school aims to provide a welcoming environment where partnership between children, parents and staff is valued.

On entry to the school, the children show abilities, which are just below those expected for their age. Twenty two percent of the children are on the school's register of special educational needs. Most of these children have speech difficulties, cannot articulate their words correctly and are not able to express themselves clearly. A few of the children have difficulties with their behaviour, and have not adjusted either to playing with other children or responding appropriately to requests. None of the children has a Statement of Special Educational Need, but a few have help from services outside of the school. The characteristics of the school are similar to those when it was previously inspected in May 1997.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, which is highly valued by the community it serves. The experienced and dedicated headteacher leads the school very well. She is supported by a group of enthusiastic governors who are suitably involved in the life of the school, and help to guide its long-term development. All the staff show a high level of commitment to their work. They function very well as a team, and share the headteacher's vision for the school. The children make good progress in the school because they are taught well. The school is very successful in involving parents in the children's education, and loaning books and games to them to extend their learning at home. It has successfully identified areas in which it needs to develop, but these are far outweighed by what it does well. The school continues to provide good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is very well led, and there is a clear and purposeful sense of teamwork from the staff and governors.
- It offers a very high level of care for the children, and provides well for their personal development.
- It achieves its aim to provide a welcoming family atmosphere where all are valued.
- It provides very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children.
- The children have positive attitudes to school; they get on well together and are very well behaved.

What could be improved

- The system for the planning of the work should be refined even further.
- The record keeping should be more consistent and useful.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was previously inspected, it was judged to be a good school, which served the community well. However, four issues were identified as areas in need of improvement, and in response to which the governors drew up a suitable action plan. As a result, the children now have more opportunities to write their names, and to see that writing has a range of different purposes. They also have more chance to extend their creative development through dance, drama and music, and have explored and enjoyed a wide range of media to express their creativity in the visual arts. Increased provision for information and communication technology has given the children greater access to computer programs that have helped them to improve their knowledge and understanding of the world. The teacher's planning has been reviewed, but there is still a need for further improvement. Overall, the school has made good progress with the issues identified in the previous report.

STANDARDS

The majority of the children start at the school with levels of attainment that are slightly below those expected for their age. Almost a fifth of the children experience problems with their speech and language, and a few started at school with behavioural difficulties. Although they have only been at the school for a little over a term, many of the children have caught up and in all the areas of learning their attainment is now broadly similar to that expected. It is slightly better than expected in their personal and social development. This is because the school has helped the children to make good progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, and has a particular emphasis on supporting children's independence and perseverance.

The children have made good strides in their personal and social development. They sustain concentration on many activities for at least fifteen minutes, and see tasks through to completion. They show an awareness of their own needs and those of others, and select and use resources carefully and independently. The children listen well for sustained periods of time, for example at 'Family Group Time' when they listen to instructions, questions, comments and stories. Their speech is improving, and they show great confidence in expressing their opinions, even though some of them still find it difficult to articulate their words. They handle books correctly, and the majority of them know that books are usually read from left to right and from the front to the back. They recognise their names and put them on the 'apple tree' each day to signify that they have arrived at school. A few of the older children write their names independently, and the remainder make good efforts to do so by tracing or copying from their name cards. The children show curiosity about numbers and count objects in their play, such as the number of cakes they have made at the dough table. A few are beginning to recognise numerals correctly and are able to solve simple number problems, such as how many more slices of apple are needed so that everyone can have a piece. They recognise common shapes such as circles, and are starting to sort their toys out according to their own criteria, such as sets of big and little things.

The children are very curious about the world around them and are keen to explore and investigate, for example using the magnifiers to look closely at the hyacinth bulbs that are starting to grow. They know how to use the mouse to move the cursor around the computer screen, and understand that the controllable toy can only move after they have programmed it to do so. Their physical development is coming along satisfactorily through activities such as the basketball net and bead threading, which help them to improve their hand and eye co-ordination. The children show appropriate skills in climbing, balancing and manoeuvring when playing with the large equipment in the garden, and they are starting to see the effect that exercise has on their bodies. Standards in creative development have improved since the last inspection. The children sing familiar songs confidently and tap out simple rhythms to accompany them. They paint confidently and enjoy mixing colours for themselves, although they are not yet able to predict the outcome of the colours they have chosen to mix. In role-play, they immerse themselves into the roles of doctors, patients and nurses, and use all of the available equipment well to extend their imaginative play.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; the children clearly enjoy school and are keen to learn. They are interested in the activities that are provided for them and concentrate well.
Behaviour	Very good; almost all the children do as they are asked, take turns with each other, and show respect for other people's feelings.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; the children show confidence and independence. They get on well together and understand the need to share.
Attendance	Good: systems are now in place to follow up absence, and parents are encouraged to bring their children promptly to each session.

These areas are real strengths of the school. The children's positive attitudes to learning and their very good behaviour contribute to the good progress that they make whilst in the school. The staff work hard to foster such a good response from the children, and they are successful in making the learning pleasurable. The

children gain in confidence from the secure routines provided, and this helps them to settle down well to the challenges that are provided for them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Sessions 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.

Eighteen lessons were observed during the inspection. The teaching was very good in 17 per cent of these lessons, good in 50 per cent and satisfactory in the remainder. A particular strength in the teaching is the way that all staff work together and share common aims and values. The staff clearly care for the children and are keen for them to succeed, and in consequence the children gain confidence in their learning. All staff have high expectations of the children's personal development and there is a gentle insistence that the children should try to do things for themselves before asking for help. The staff work very hard, and are competent in teaching communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. They teach basic skills like counting and writing in interesting ways which the children enjoy. This helps the children to see that learning is fun and contributes to how well they achieve in the school. The staff are good at telling stories, and engaging in role-play with the children. This is particularly beneficial in extending the children's language, and supporting their creative development. The staff try to ensure that all the children are included in the curriculum that they provide. The specific sessions for the children with learning difficulties are good, and the needs of these children are met well by the school. However, there are fewer occasions when specific lessons are planned for other identified groups of children, as much of the session is given over to freely chosen activities. Observations of what the children can do are a regular part of each session, and these are shared with the team at the end of each session. However, these observations should be included in the children's records so that they are as up to date and as informative as possible. The staff plan reasonably well for what is to be taught each week, and they are beginning to adapt their plans to take account of the recent national guidance.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a stimulating curriculum that promotes the early learning goals both inside the nursery and in the garden.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. The children with specific needs are well supported through effective teaching and appropriate specialist involvement.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The staff are very adept at encouraging the children to become independent and self-confident learners. They encourage the children to take responsibility and share in a sense of community. Suitable opportunities are provided for the children to reflect on their lives and to appreciate the world in which they live.
How well the school cares for its children	Very well. All staff and governors are dedicated to create an environment in which the children feel safe and secure. The staff know the children very well, and work closely with others in order to meet their needs. The school's practices for child protection are good, and are regularly reviewed.

The nursery places very high value in creating an ethos of care and comfort for all its users. Parents are encouraged to stay until their children are settled, and the staff follow up any instances where the children either show anxiety or behave differently from usual.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good; the headteacher sets a good example for her team, and has a clear vision of what she wishes to achieve. Although she has little time outside her teaching duties, she manages to keep abreast of recommended guidance, attend to administrative duties, carry out the role of special needs' co-ordinator and guide the development of the school. The nursery teacher and other staff support the headteacher well, and this accounts for the smooth running of the school and its continuing good provision.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors undertake their duties enthusiastically and diligently. They work in close partnership with the headteacher, and act as her critical friends.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The governors and management team have a realistic overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They evaluate past initiatives, and have a clear, though short term, plan for further development.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school makes suitable use of all the grants, resources and personnel at its disposal.

The overall high quality of the school's provision is due to the effective leadership of the headteacher, and the support she is given by the governors and key staff. The headteacher recognises the dedication and hard work shown by the staff team, and her collegiate approach ensures that they feel valued, and have their contributions recognised. The governors take their duties seriously, are keen to embrace new requirements like performance management, and seek appropriate training in order to carry out their duties properly.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way that they are welcomed into the school • The way the school cares for their children • The opportunity to borrow books and games • The information they receive from the school • The wide range of learning experiences provided by the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no areas of concern.

Although there were only a small number of responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and only a few who attended the meeting, parents were very pleased by all that the school offers. The inspection team agrees that parents are welcomed into the school, and provided with genuine opportunities to take part in their children's learning. The loan system is very impressive, and helps the parents to support their children's learning, particularly in mathematics. The parents who were spoken to during the inspection were extremely positive about all the school has to offer.

Although parents are provided with a good level of information through the weekly newsletter, the nursery sells itself short on the amount of information it provides for them in the prospectus.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school is very well led, and there is a clear and purposeful sense of teamwork from staff and governors.

1. The headteacher, who is well established and respected by the community, has considerable experience in teaching very young children. She understands their needs and those of their families, and has created a school where these needs are at the heart of the provision. Her clarity of vision and her dedicated leadership have made very strong contributions to the very good ethos of the school. She has high expectations of all the staff team, and most notably of herself. She works very hard to manage her full-time teaching role alongside her other commitments. One member of staff summed up the headteacher's contribution by saying, 'Linda does everything'.
2. The headteacher values the contributions made by all members of staff. For instance, she was quick to point out during the inspection, that the successful progress of the children is due to the dedication and hard work of the team with whom she works. The staff share a common sense of purpose, and put the needs of the children first. This approach reflects fully the aims of the school, and recognises the importance of 'a deeper understanding of the needs of individual children'. Each member of the team makes a special contribution to the school, and the governors have made wise appointments to create a team with complementary strengths and interests. All the staff share in the responsibilities well during the sessions, and communication between them is very good. The result of this is that all the children are kept on task and there is a brisk pace to the sessions. If there are unusual circumstances, like a child becoming ill, all the staff are informed, but one takes on the custodial role, so that the rest of the staff can remain focussed on their teaching.
3. The governors are truly involved in the life of the school and know it well. The chair of governors is local and is a frequent visitor to the school. He takes his duties very seriously, performs them well, and makes a good contribution to how well the school functions. Other governors have specific roles, for instance oversight of special educational needs, and performance management. These roles are carried out well, and support the headteacher in running the school.

The school offers a very high level of care for the children, and provides well for their personal development.

4. The school has good procedures to care for the children, which it implements well to ensure that each one benefits from a feeling of security and comfort. The formal procedures for child protection are well known to all staff, and are regularly reviewed to ensure that everyone keeps abreast of any changes. Staff are alert to any changes of behaviour, and these are followed up. For instance, one child who was not her usual cheerful self was carefully observed before taking the matter further.
5. During each session, the staff show that they are concerned about the children's health, for instance one child with a persistent cough was reassured and cared for by one of the nursery nurses. Health and safety routines are clearly set out, and potential risks are identified and acted on promptly. At the end of each session, the staff ensure that each child is handed over personally to the child's nominated carer before relinquishing their responsibility. If any visitors to the building compromise the safety of the children, for example by parking within the yellow lines, it is the headteacher's practice to ask them to move.
6. The school supports the children's personal development very successfully. The children know the routines well, and this gives them security and confidence. The various work areas are organised to give the children the maximum opportunity to get things out for themselves. For example, in the workshop area the children make models by joining various objects together with glue and tape, and they do this without having to ask for help. They move from activity to activity without any fuss, and understand if they need to wait their turn. Boys and girls get on equally well together, play happily and share willingly in each other's games. At the end of each session the song, 'Everybody tidy up' signals that children should stop what they are doing and join in to put things away for the next

session. If any children are left at the end of the session, the staff distract them very well to ensure that they feel no sense of abandonment.

7. The staff encourage the children to offer opinions, and in turn the children know that their views are valued. At music time, for instance, the children who did not like the music had no hesitation in saying that it was too loud, and that 'It sounded weird'. The staff also encourage the children to try things for themselves, and to complete their responsibilities. They praise them appropriately for their efforts; for instance one remark to two children was 'You have worked hard tidying those blocks, but you haven't finished yet, please go back and make sure they are all put away'. This sensitive remark ensured that the children's efforts were rewarded, but they were not left in any doubt that they were not to return until the chore was completed. This fosters perseverance, co-operation and a sense of achievement in seeing an activity through to completion.

The school achieves its aim to provide a welcoming family atmosphere where all are valued.

8. The parents are very content with what their children receive, and say that they are welcomed into the school and find the staff very approachable. There is a welcoming family atmosphere where the needs of parents and young children have been carefully considered. The entrance porch has a range of useful information for families, and there is a daily bulletin board, which keeps parents informed of current issues. The parents appreciate this, and when asked about communication with the school one parent said, 'It's brilliant!'
9. Information about the curriculum is available, and the parents are encouraged to attend sessions where they can find out more about the various areas of learning. The loan scheme is particularly good, and helps the learning to continue at home. There are over 80 mathematics games which parents borrow in addition to the wide range of books available. The main nursery classrooms are a good source of information about the curriculum. Staff take pride in the beautiful displays of children's work, which celebrate achievement and effort, rather than the end product. The children's efforts are regularly celebrated with the award of certificates, and parents are encouraged to contribute to this by suggesting areas of achievement from home.
10. The staff show that they are available to talk to parents, and their relationships with the parents are very warm. The teachers know many of the families very well, as older children have attended the school in previous years, and they ask about how they are getting on at primary school. The previous inspection reported that the school had a strong commitment to parental partnership, and the school has continued to build on its good practice. It seeks the views of its parents both informally, and through more formal procedures like a questionnaire. Responses to the school's own survey and the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positively in favour of what the school provides.

The school provides very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children.

11. This was considered to be an area of strength at the time of the previous inspection, and it continues to be so. The staff nurture the children's spiritual growth by giving them time where they have to reflect on simple questions which explore their feelings. In a story about baby owls, for example, the children were asked to think about what it might feel like to be frightened, and to imagine what relief the baby birds felt when their mother returned. They are taught to look very carefully at the illustrations in books, and say what they think the characters are feeling and saying. Numerous opportunities are given to the children to experience awe and wonder at the world. For example, in mixing primary colours together, the children were amazed at the range of shades they could produce for themselves. When the severe weather brought frost to the nursery garden, the children were clearly delighted to see the effect it had on the trees; they had lots of fun cracking the ice and watching their breath freeze over.
12. The clear codes of expected behaviour help the children to see that they have responsibilities towards one another. The staff encourage the children to say 'Thank you', and to apologise if they do wrong. They are encouraged to play together harmoniously, learn how to get on well, and trust each other. Many activities are organised so that the children have to take turns and share their resources. For example, the provision of one large piece of paper for two children to create a shared painting was very

beneficial to their social development. The staff encourage the children to negotiate. One child with identified behavioural difficulties, for instance was encouraged to ask another for a turn on the tricycle, by saying, 'Please can I have a go when you have finished'? He was given the words to say by his helper, who then stood and waited with him until the child relinquished the tricycle, and reminded him to say thank you to the child.

13. The school's cultural provision is rich. The children have celebrated the festivals of Diwali and Christmas, and photographs show how much they enjoyed the experiences. There is a wide range of resources, some of which were used to very good effect during the inspection when one of the nursery nurses dressed up with the children to perform Indian dances. Musical instruments are freely available, and the children use them frequently to make their own music. They listen regularly to recorded music and freely express their ideas and opinions about it. Visitors are a part of the nursery's tradition, and the children are taken out to places of interest to broaden their cultural development.

The children have positive attitudes to school, they get on well together, and they are well behaved.

14. The children are very well behaved. They respond well to instructions and requests, and realise that they have to wait their turn without making a fuss. They show respect for each other's feelings and display self-control in a range of situations. At snack time they pass food and milk to each other and eat and drink in a well-mannered sociable way. They enjoy the opportunity to take on small responsibilities, like taking a message, and show great care when handling their pet guinea pigs. Even those with identified behavioural difficulties are beginning to modify their conduct to acceptable standards, and have made good progress since they started at the school.
15. In all the observations made during the inspection, the children had positive attitudes to their learning. This was so in a range of situations, whether the children were working on their own, with a friend, or alongside one of the adults. They show delight and interest in what they do, and sheer joy when they succeed. They are developing perseverance and tenacity in their learning. This was evident, for instance, when they were threading beads with very small holes on to a fine needle until they had sufficient to make a pleasing pattern. They are keen to learn, and to contribute their ideas. They listen to each other and are starting to truly collaborate in their play. All these are very useful life skills, and will stand them in good stead when they transfer to their primary school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The systems for planning should be refined even further.

16. The nursery is currently reviewing the planning and record-keeping systems within the scope of this year's school development plan. A considerable amount of work has already been done, and clear improvements can be seen since the nursery's previous inspection. Since then, however, new guidance has become available which schools are recommended to adopt, and this has implications for the way that the curriculum is planned. Whilst the staff have undertaken training about the new curriculum, and have begun to adapt the school's systems in line with new recommendations, there is still further work to be done.
17. A clearer view needs to be taken of the areas of learning that are to be taught each week. The current weekly planning, which is based around the layout of the classrooms, does not provide a full enough picture of either the specific objectives of each activity, or the area of learning from which it is drawn. Some lesson planning is done, particularly for the children with special needs, but there is not enough to identify the specific teaching focus of particular activities. In consequence, some of the planned teaching lacks clear objectives, and some of the work is not well enough matched to the needs of the children. The staff are very intuitive in their teaching, and good at responding to the children who come to their activities. However, at the initial stage they do not determine clearly and precisely for whom the particular activity is intended, and how it could be modified to meet the various needs and abilities of the children.

The record keeping should be more consistent and useful.

18. The staff are very good at observing the children. Each day useful information is gathered on the children's level of involvement and the outcomes of their learning. These are discussed at the ends of the sessions when the staff evaluate what has been provided. Each child has a valuable file, which celebrates and records their achievement, and their parents are encouraged to contribute to these records. Although the staff collect a lot of potentially useful information, not all of it finds its way into their on-going records. Some of these records have gaps where there is too little recorded over the period of a term, some entries are not dated, and others are open to misinterpretation. For example, 'can use a pencil' tells the reader little about the child's pencil grip, pressure and confidence in its use; 'carries out instructions' does not say of what complexity, and 'has mature speech' would be better replaced by a verbatim comment from the child to exemplify such speech. Gaps in the records are evident both for particular areas of learning like mathematics, and for some children who have less frequent entries than others. This limits the headteacher's ability to evaluate the progress the children are making through various topics, and to advise the staff of the outcomes of their teaching.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

19. In order to strengthen the good quality of the teaching, and to aid the headteacher in her evaluation, the nursery should:
- (a) Continue to refine its planning systems to include specific daily lesson plans, which have clear objectives and identify the children for whom they are appropriate.
 - (b) Ensure that the record keeping is consistently dated, more frequently entered, and clear so that the comments cannot be misinterpreted.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	50	33	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	38
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	17

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	N/A

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	N/A

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	78

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	125,874.00
Total expenditure	130,754.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,269.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,615.00
Balance carried forward to next year	3,735.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	76
Number of questionnaires returned	16

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	44	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	44	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	50	0	0	13
The teaching is good.	69	31	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	81	19	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	25	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	38	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	75	25	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	75	25	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	38	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	75	25	0	0	0