

INSPECTION REPORT

Camborne Nursery School

Camborne

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 111789

Headteacher: Jean Webb

Reporting inspector: Barry Allsop
1245

Dates of inspection: 15 -16 March 2000

Inspection number: 194667
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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 5

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Camborne Nursery School
The Glebe
Camborne
Cornwall

Postcode: TR14 7DT

Telephone number: 01209 713607

Fax number: 01209 713607

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Sheila Parker

Date of previous inspection: 20 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Barry Allsop | Registered inspector |
| Patricia Bowen | Lay inspector |

The inspection contractor was:

Dorset School Inspection Services

School Effectiveness Service
County Hall
Colliton Park
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 1XJ

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REPORT CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|---------------|
| PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT | 6 - 10 |
| 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 | 11-14 |
| The quality of teaching is good | |
| The school is very well led | |
| The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils are very good | |
| The nursery encourages very good behaviour, attitudes and relationships | |
| The curriculum is well planned, broad, balanced and very relevant to the needs of the children | |
| The links with parents are good | |
| WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED | 14 |
| The regular monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum needs extending to include the quality of teaching to make it even better | |
| The wide ranging recording of the pupils' attainment and progress requires greater coherence | |
| WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER? | 15 |
| PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS | 16-17 |

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Camborne Nursery School is close to the centre of Camborne in Cornwall. It is a specialist nursery school equipped for the education of three and four year old children. There are 70 children who attend the school mainly part-time, either five mornings or five afternoons. A small, but growing number, attend full-time. The children come from a mixture of owner-occupied and council-owned properties. The nursery has worked hard to encourage parents from a wider range of backgrounds to make use of the school. The town is, however, subject to high unemployment and general social deprivation. The nursery is part of an Education Action Zone.

Two of the pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. The school has a high proportion of children with special educational needs and provides education for three young children with hearing impairment with a specialist unit on the premises. Two children attend the school part-time from the child development nursery at Treliske Hospital.

The children start the school in the term after their third birthday. The vast majority stay for just over one year before moving to reception classes in six schools in the town and others further away. The attainment of the children on entry to the nursery is, overall, below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Camborne Nursery is a very good school. It offers a well-taught, rich and stimulating curriculum. The school is well resourced with bright and cheerful classrooms and attractive well-used grounds. The quality of teaching is good and all staff effectively promote very good behaviour and attitudes. The school is well led. The headteacher has continued to promote a well-planned curriculum which offers very good provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The headteacher and governors have been successful in increasing the involvement of parents in the life and work of the nursery.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good.
- The school is very well led.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils are very good.
- The nursery encourages very good behaviour, attitudes and relationships.
- The curriculum is well planned, broad, balanced and very relevant to the needs of the children.
- The links with the parents are good.

What could be improved

- The regular monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum needs extending to include the quality of teaching to make it even better.
- The plan to bring coherence to the wide-ranging records of the children's attainment and progress needs to be put into operation as soon as possible.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1997. The nursery school was found to offer a very good education. The teaching was good and the children made good progress. The curriculum was broad and balanced but provision for information technology was inadequate. The caring ethos was a major strength of the school. Leadership was good but there was a need to monitor and evaluate classroom practice. The children were in line to meet the requirements of the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

Since the last inspection the nursery has improved. The identified strengths are still present but also the range and quality of information technology equipment have improved. There are three good quality computers and a floor robot available for the children. The monitoring of classroom practice has developed with regular evaluation of the planned curriculum in operation in the classrooms. The formal monitoring of the quality of teaching, whilst planned, has not yet commenced. The planning of the curriculum has improved. There is now greater emphasis on identifying what the children are to learn from the wide variety of activities. The range of assessment information has increased but is currently gathered in a variety of books, folders and sheets, and not in one comprehensive appropriate record for each child. The good links with parents have been extended by, for example, producing and using "story sacks" with the children. Regular parent-teacher interviews take place but there are no end-of-year written reports. The staffing of the nursery is now much more stable after a period of considerable change. The school is in a strong position to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of pupils in relation to the national early learning goals by the time they leave the school.

| Performance in: | | Key |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Language and literacy | C | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E |
| Mathematics | C | |
| Personal and social development | C | |
| Other areas of the curriculum | C | |

By the time the children leave the nursery most of them are in line to meet the requirements of the desirable learning outcomes by the time they are five. The development of language and literacy skills is good. The children capably express their ideas as they describe a ladybird or recall a day out in the forest. They handle books properly and "read" a story to a friend using the pictures. In mathematics they count and order numbers up to ten. They capably name and sort shapes by size and colour and repeat a pattern. They enthusiastically join in rhymes and songs which include numbers. They make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world as they use the mouse to click on objects and move them across the computer screen, competently make themselves a simple sandwich at the snack table or find creatures in the school grounds. They show good skills in painting, printing and weaving and take care to keep work bright and colourful. As they move energetically in music and movement they make good use of the limited space in the classrooms. They develop good physical skills as they balance on beams in the grounds or confidently climb up to use the school slide.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | The children are very enthusiastic about school life and work. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | The behaviour is very good. Children wait patiently to take turns with equipment and share apparatus. They treat all the resources with care and respect. |
| Personal development and relationships | The personal development of the pupils is good. The pupils are given good opportunities to become independent, make choices, select equipment or choose materials with which to work. Adult and child relationships are very strong. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory. |

The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are very good. They listen attentively, respond enthusiastically to questions and share resources and equipment sensibly. When working at painting, making scarecrows or simple "writing", they concentrate and persevere at the tasks well. They show each other care and understanding. They confidently and eagerly show their string prints or weaving to adults and friends. They mix well both in and outside the classroom.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged up to 5 years |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 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.

The quality of teaching is good. In the teaching seen, 45% was very good and 55% was good. The classrooms are very well organised with a wide range of stimulating and purposeful activities to capture the children's interests. The increasingly clear identification of what the children are to learn helps to promote growth in knowledge and skills. Wide-ranging information is recorded about the children. However, these useful assessments are not currently kept in one coherent record for each child and tracking an individual child's progress is not consistent. The teachers, nursery nurses and support assistants work hard to help children feel confident and succeed in tasks. The children successfully gain new knowledge about the wind, insects, numbers and the meaning of words as they sustain concentration and think for themselves. The children reward the staff's dedication with eagerness and delight as they weave material, march in time to music or listen mesmerised to a story about the wind. The staff have a good understanding of all children's needs and sensitively integrate pupils with hearing impairment. Work is appropriately adapted for the high attaining children or those with learning difficulties. Teamwork and good knowledge of curriculum requirements enable staff to move quickly and efficiently from helping children, for example, to match a pattern of shapes to supporting them outside in balancing and climbing.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum is very good. The activities are well planned, varied, stimulating and readily capture the children's interests. Visits to a farm, art gallery, theatre and a weekly session at a forest school all successfully enrich the children's experiences. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | The needs of these pupils are well met. Children with hearing impairment are successfully integrated into lessons. Bright pupils are given extra challenge. |
| Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | All aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contribute very well to the children's personal development. The nursery successfully helps all children to be independent, confident and respect the needs of others. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The nursery makes every effort to keep the children safe and effectively supported. The very friendly family atmosphere ensures all are children are well cared for. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher helps to create a very good ethos. She has a clear vision for the development of the nursery. The teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants form a strong and effective team. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors are knowledgeable, active, interested and well trained. They are taking an increasing role in monitoring the work of the nursery. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The staff carefully and regularly analyse the effectiveness of the curriculum on children's learning. Plans for the headteacher to look formally at the quality of teaching have yet to come into operation. |
| The strategic use of resources | Whilst the nursery does not have full control of its budget, it does make very good use of all staff, time, materials, buildings and grounds. The classroom are used most effectively even for very active physical education sessions. |

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 children make good progress.• The children like the school.• They as parents feel very comfortable about approaching the school with any questions.• The nursery is well led and managed.• The good quality of the teaching.• The children are expected to work hard.• The nursery is helping the children to be sensible and mature. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents would like to be given more information about how well their children are progressing.• The children are given the right amount of work to do at home. |

The inspection team agrees with the overwhelmingly positive views expressed by the parents. However, the team views the amount of work the children do at home as being appropriate. Books are sent home with a diary for recording parents' comments. Story sacks and items of equipment are also regularly given to the children to share at home. The information parents receive about the children's progress is generally good. Work is sent home almost daily, parents talk to staff each day as they leave and collect children. They have two formal opportunities each year to sit down and talk with the teacher. It would, however, improve the system if a brief written report were given annually to parents and when a child leaves the nursery.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The quality of teaching is good.

1. The strength of the nursery lies in the way all the staff want to help the children to enjoy their learning and to succeed. All the staff work as a team, spend time to plan the curriculum and take care to present resources and tasks in an exciting way. On entering the classrooms the children's eyes light up and they move immediately into the inviting activities. The water tray changes each session, for example, from being a wonderful aquarium filled with blue water and exotic toy sea creatures to a place where simple pumps and different containers can be explored. The staff have a very good understanding of the needs of young children and what interests them. They have good knowledge of the requirements of the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The two classrooms are focused on different elements of the curriculum and over a period of two weeks the staff rotate through the rooms. They make effective use of specialist interests briefly in either more physical, environmental and creative activities followed by the language and mathematical elements of the curriculum another week. The children work across the two rooms and benefit from a wider range of expertise, gain confidence in using the whole of the nursery and working with a larger number of adults. The promotion of language and literacy and mathematics are given high priority. For example, when talking about the wind, children are also effectively introduced to simple number concepts by singing about five leaves on a tree and subtracting one as each is blown away. They are encouraged to expand their understanding of words as when asked to provide phrases used when trying to scare away birds. They are encouraged to attempt to then write their ideas. Books are constantly referred to and handled well in the sessions.

2. The nursery nurses, support staff and any parent helpers are very well briefed and are generally aware of what children are to learn from an activity. They complete recording sheets about how well each child achieves a task. The clarity with which learning objectives are initially identified is increasingly effective but some planned outcomes are still too general, for example, "to make a mask." All staff make good use of questioning to check understanding and to match work to the children's capabilities. Their comfortable relationships with all the children make discussion easy. A teacher, working with a child, making patterns using coloured plastic shapes, carefully checked if the child knew the names of the shapes and the colours. She set increasingly difficult patterns for the child to copy. She finished by asking the child to close her eyes whilst a piece was taken from the pattern and checked to see if the child could name the shape and colour of the missing piece. This pushing of children to the edge of their learning capability keeps them interested and gaining in skills and knowledge.

3. The classrooms have an air of busy involvement. All staff work as a close team, quickly and flexibly stepping into an activity to maximise the learning opportunities. For example a teacher went to find a child for language and literacy work and found him with a group under the trees in the garden looking at objects and creatures on the ground. She quickly engaged the children in naming and identifying the things and reasoning about how they could have got there. In another instance a support assistant on noticing a child who was finding co-operation and concentration difficult, quickly calmed his behaviour and gradually steered him back to productive involvement in the class.

The school is very well led.

4. The headteacher has been in post for five terms and she has brought with her a clear vision to build on the good qualities of the nursery. She has effectively established greater parental involvement and access to the school in a desire to give them a clearer grasp of the teaching and learning to enable them to take a part in raising standards. She has energetically improved the quality of the planning, establishing good medium and short-term planning. The identification of what the children are to learn when they, for example, share books with friends or look at small insects or make a simple model scarecrow, is increasingly well done and understood. This is helping to raise standards. The headteacher effectively monitors whether the planned curriculum is the one on offer in the classrooms. All staff take part in a weekly review of the curriculum and adapt an activity in the light of that analysis. The teaching staff successfully manage and brief the well-trained and capable support staff.

5. The quality of teaching is monitored informally by the head. Firm plans are now in place for the systematic formal evaluation of teaching to start. The governors take an active role in the development and monitoring of the school. Very recently a parent governor followed the work of a member of staff for the day to gain a greater understanding of the teaching and learning and commented, "It was enjoyable and gave me a good insight into the busy and complex work of the nursery."

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils are very good.

6. Every opportunity is taken to arouse the children's spiritual awareness. The nursery is alive with pictures, displays and objects to stimulate the children. The newly acquired large fish tank draws children to look in wonder at the variety of shapes, colours and contrasting movements. A collection of frogspawn, tadpoles or plants in the garden all arouse delight and curiosity. A girl with a ladybird resting on her hand is asked about its vivid colour, delicacy of its wings, how it should be treated and where it should be put for safety. Moral and social growth is constantly affirmed through the daily caring interactions of staff and children. The plight of children caught in an earthquake is discussed and a collection undertaken to send support. The children are given a daily opportunity to make a snack. They independently spread butter on bread and make a sandwich and choose a piece of fruit. They are expected to sit at the appropriate table and display good manners. They talk freely to each other as they eat. A group each week goes out into the local forest to experience playing and working in the outdoor environment, respecting nature, erecting shelters and making resting places. The staff constantly highlight the correct way in which to relate to others. They themselves provide good role models.

7. The cultural development of the children is enhanced by visits to the theatre, the New Tate Gallery and parents with artistic expertise join the classes. A musician with a large collection of African drums had recently worked with all children and each had been given a drum play. Chinese New Year, Hanukah and Divali are all actively experienced. A Jewish parent effectively explains the purposes and rituals of her beliefs. These wide ranging cultural activities, characterised by the welcome notice written in many languages, all successfully develop the children's understanding and capacity for tolerance.

The nursery encourages very good behaviour, attitudes and relationships.

8. The rules of the nursery are clearly understood by all. The staff constantly reinforce the high expectations for the children to listen, take turns, be sensitive to others and share resources. The children handle books, construction kits and computer equipment with respect. At the close of the sessions they readily tidy away, often without a reminder from

the staff. Pairs of children co-operate safely to put away quite heavy blocks and balancing planks in the outside store. They wait sensibly to take turns on the slide or to use a pot of paint. The children are encouraged to take responsibility and be independent. When weaving they chose materials and whether to use the large loom or small card ones. They confidently decide to build a car or a buggy using large construction kits. They become absorbed in tasks, such as using the mouse to move a bumblebee across the computer screen to land on a flower. They frequently sustain their interest for lengths of time. The relationships developed between all involved in the school is a particular strength. The staff and children find pleasure in each other's company. In a music and movement lesson all four adult helpers joined in the vigorous marching activities, crouching down or wobbling like a jelly. All present enjoyed the physical activity and the teacher offered encouraging comment and praise to all, including other staff.

The curriculum is well planned, broad, balanced and very relevant to the needs of the children.

9. The headteacher has brought about considerable improvement in the planning of the curriculum with an increasing emphasis on identifying what is to be learned each week. The curriculum is broad, balanced and the children benefit from a wide range of practical, interesting and relevant experiences. There is a good mix between child-chosen and staff-directed activity. Considerable responsibility is placed upon the children to select learning experiences from within the boundaries of the carefully structured framework. The planning is gradually broken down from an overall termly structure to detailed weekly plans where the learning outcomes are identified. The work planned for the two classrooms is focused on different aspects of the desirable learning outcomes and this makes good use of resources and staff expertise. The provision for the children's personal development is very good. The staff make good use of "circle time" where the children sit and discuss such matters as what it means to share and be kind to others. This has a positive effect upon behaviour.

10. The work for the pupils with special educational needs is carefully planned to ensure they have full access to all areas of the curriculum. The detailed analysis of needs ensures effective individual education plans are developed. The children with hearing impairment are very well managed with close co-operation with staff from the audiological unit. Children with considerable hearing loss are successfully integrated into such activities as music and movement where they gain equal enjoyment.

11. Activities are well planned for an extension group to meet the needs of the more able children. Twice weekly sessions using language and literacy activities stretch their skills and understanding. Good planning takes place to meet the needs of a language support group which operates three times each week. Here children are given additional help by, for example, playing games which involve the wide use of language. The careful planning and breadth of activity offers all good opportunities to learn.

The links with the parents are good.

12. The school has effectively widened its range of contact with parents. They are now very welcome in the classrooms. They bring the children into the room and often stay for a length of time and talk to staff about their children. They watch the child's rapid involvement with painting, construction, books and pattern making with considerable interest. Some help to get the children settled into an activity. This gives them an idea of the child's capabilities and confidence in mixing with others. Parents feel relaxed and comfortable in the school. One parent said "I think staff would like us to stay all day".

13. The headteacher is close to the door of the school at all opening and closing times. She is readily available and easily approachable for all parents and other carers. The introduction of the "story sacks" has involved parents working as a group in the nursery to produce these lively collections of toys, pictures, hats and clothing to complement such stories as "Elmer the Elephant". Books, games and other items of equipment go home very regularly with the children and parents record the experiences in a useful diary. A nursery nurse runs an effective pre-nursery group for the under-three's just before they start in the school. Here the parents are able to talk about the needs of their children, get to know the staff and the way in which the nursery operates. The good brochure and regular newsletters keep parents very well informed. The parents are told about the topics being taught, notices, leaflets and booklets are all available for them in the entrance. All of this helps to engage parents in supporting the teaching and learning activities at home. The immediate access to staff and twice yearly parent-teacher interviews keep parents informed about the children's progress. They do not, however, receive a written report about the children. The parents help with reading in class and go on a variety of planned visits or share their particular specialist knowledge and expertise with the children. They are made to feel very much part of the life of the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The regular monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum needs extending to include the quality of teaching to make it even better.

14. The headteacher and all staff are involved in monitoring the quality of the curriculum. The head checks the quality of the literacy content in sessions. Another teacher monitors the quantity of numeracy involved in the wide ranging activities. All staff are involved in a thorough discussion and written evaluation of the previous week's work before planning the next week. The governors visit the school and track the work of staff to gain an understanding of the curriculum. However, the absences and changes in staff have made the formal evaluation of teaching difficult to undertake. The recent stabilising of staff now offers the opportunity for the headteacher to start the planned formal monitoring of the quality of the teaching. In particular there is a need to check if the emphasis on identifying clear learning objectives is being consistently and effectively done and children's successes or failures are appropriately recorded.

The wide ranging recording of the pupils' attainment and progress requires greater coherence.

15. All staff know the children very well and are constantly observing and talking about their progress. On occasions specific activities are used for assessment purposes and the child's level of capability is noted. Each child has a book in which each term they record a picture. There are also numerous record sheets for noting the child's response to an activity, a significant achievements sheet and the Cornwall Baseline Assessment record. Whilst providing useful information these lack coherence and not all are appropriate. The work of an individual child is difficult to track without reference to a wide range of records. A very new comprehensive record of achievement has been developed but is not yet in use. The staff need to bring this into use, to have it readily available and to complete it regularly to ensure that they have good evidence to show how each child is experiencing and progressing in all areas of the required curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

16. The school should now:

- extend the regular monitoring and evaluating of the curriculum to include the quality of teaching;
- bring greater coherence to the recording of the pupils' attainment and progress.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 10 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 4 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 50 | 50 | 0 | 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) | 35 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 0 |

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 | 18 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 2 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 6 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 15 |

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 3.7 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 11 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 7 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 164 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 4 |
|--------------------------------|---|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| Financial year | 98/99 |
|----------------|-------|

| | £ |
|--|--------|
| Total income | 166233 |
| Total expenditure | 161041 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 4,238 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 9,500 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 14,692 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 35 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 34 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 71 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 71 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 56 | 35 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 35 | 38 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| The teaching is good. | 71 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 62 | 12 | 12 | 6 | 9 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 85 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 53 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 59 | 35 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 74 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 56 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 44 | 29 | 3 | 0 | 24 |