

INSPECTION REPORT

BISHOPSWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Barlows Road, Tadley, Hampshire, RG26 3NA

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116013

Headteacher: Mrs Louise Buchanan

Reporting inspector: Mrs Janet Watts
OIN: 1945

Dates of inspection: 6th – 7th November 2001

Inspection number: 196141

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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Barlows Road, Tadley Hampshire
Postcode:	RG26 3NA
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Margaret Wicks
Date of previous inspection:	02/07/1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bishopswood Junior is an average sized junior school with 232 boys and girls on roll aged seven to eleven. The school is situated in Tadley, north of Basingstoke, Hampshire. There are few pupils from an ethnic minority background although three pupils speak English as an additional language and have a Bangladeshi or Chinese heritage. At twenty-six per cent, the proportion of pupils having special educational needs and Statements is above average. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average. Most pupils transfer from the neighbouring infants school, which shares the same site as the junior school. Attainment on entry is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, with a number of very good features and no significant weaknesses. It is well respected by parents and the community. Under the very positive and clear sighted leadership of the headteacher, very ably supported by the staff and the effective governing body, the school has successfully focused on raising standards and on developing the quality of teaching, which is good overall. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Throughout the school there is good teaching with some that is very good, especially in the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lesson. This is particularly effective in raising standards in mathematics and in aspects of English.
- The headteacher provides very positive and clear sighted leadership. She is very ably supported by the governing body and staff. There is a very strong commitment to teamwork and raising standards. This includes the superb support given to pupils by the learning support assistants, enabling pupils to achieve well.
- The pupils have very positive attitudes to school. The pupils are taught to be independent and responsible. The adults in the school provide excellent role models and genuinely value the pupils and their opinions, so enhancing their self confidence.
- The school cares for its pupils very well indeed. The quality of pastoral care is especially high. The very good personal, social and health education programme helps pupils to become mature, thoughtful young people.

What could be improved

- Raise standards of writing, which are not as high as in other aspects of English.
- The presentation of the pupils' recorded work, so that they are more actively encouraged to take pride in their work.
- As part of teachers' regular assessments of pupils' work, ensure that marking comments state not only what pupils have done well, but what needs to be improved; marking is only rarely directed at helping pupils to assess their progress towards their individual targets.

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 significantly improved since the last inspection in 1997. The curriculum is now planned very well to ensure the progressive development of knowledge, skills and understanding. Very good progress has been made with information and communication technology (ICT), and this and design and technology now meet requirements and are taught effectively. Good progress has been made with raising standards in mathematics; many of the current pupils are attaining above average standards. The school has some most useful processes for assessing and monitoring pupils' achievements.

Subject managers are more closely involved in monitoring and evaluating the standards and the quality of teaching in their subjects, as part of the school's regular effective cycle of review and evaluation. The school has a very good capacity to improve even further and is on course to meet the targets set.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	B	B	B
mathematics	C	B	C	D
science	C	A*	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table above shows that the school's results have been consistently above average in English, compared both to the national average and similar schools. In science, results are consistently well above the national average and well above similar schools. The picture in mathematics is more variable; in 2000 results were in line with the national average but below similar schools. The 2001 results showed a decline in all core subjects; this was mainly due to the ability of the pupils because a quarter of the Year 6 pupils had significant special educational needs and required help with their learning. Work seen during the inspection indicates that many of the current Year 6 pupils are achieving above average standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science. In the other subjects, standards are firmly in line with those expected nationally for pupils aged eleven. Targets set for 2002 are ambitious and challenging (eighty-four per cent of pupils to attain Level 4 or above in English, eighty-one per cent to attain Level 4 or above in mathematics). The work seen would indicate that pupils in the current Year 6 are well on track to reach these targets, assuming that they achieve as well as they are at present. Across the school, pupils achieve well including those pupils with special educational needs, those from different backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils have very positive and mature attitudes and are very responsive and responsible.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; the school has well developed strategies for managing pupils' behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; the pupils are independent, thoughtful and respect each other. Excellent role models are provided by adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory; current levels of attendance are in line with the national average

The pupils' mature attitudes and relationships are real strengths of the school. There is a most helpful 'Buddy' system in which older pupils support younger ones. The very effective School Council, in which

representatives from each class discuss real issues and report back to their classmates, fosters the pupils' sense of responsibility and helps their understanding of the democratic process and citizenship.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	-	-	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is good or very good in nearly eight out of ten lessons. The best features of the teaching include the very good planning and very effective organisation and management of pupils which helps them to work hard, co-operate well and become independent. All pupils are included and benefit well from the quality of teaching. Tasks and activities are well matched to pupils' needs and taught in an interesting and enthusiastic way. Homework is now given regularly. It is starting to have a noticeable impact on pupils' learning and is developing their personal responsibility. Teachers have a very well developed knowledge of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and these skills are well taught. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs pupils is good. They are given superb support by the learning support assistants, who are well trained, managed and deployed and make a most positive impact on pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; planning is now very good. Helpful and sensible links are made between subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; these pupils are very well supported by both the teacher and the support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good; these pupils are fluently bilingual and receive the same very good support as other groups of pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall; especially good support is given to pupils' spiritual and moral development through well planned assemblies. Support for personal development is a great strength of the school. The school helps the pupils to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good; the headteacher and staff know the pupils very well and a caring atmosphere pervades the school. The quality of pastoral care is especially high.

The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is especially good. As a result, pupils' personal and social development are very well supported. The pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is enhanced through music, literature, poetry, visits and visitors. The school has an inclusive philosophy and all pupils, whatever their cultural heritage, background and ability, are highly valued as individuals.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very positive, clear leadership is given by headteacher and senior staff. There is a strong commitment to team work. Headteacher, staff and governors set a clear direction for the work of the school with an effective focus on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body operates successfully and is effective in its strategic role. Governors are supportive but constructively critical; they have a clear overview of every facet of school life.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Effective overall; increasingly rigorous procedures being put in place.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are very well targeted and directed towards improving the quality of education provided.

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are very good and additional strengths of the school. Governors and staff are ever conscious of the need to ensure that they get the best value from all available resources. The current absence of a caretaker is placing an unreasonable burden upon the headteacher and staff.

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 teaching is good. • Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps children become mature and responsible. • The staff are approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents consider that their child does not get the right amount of work to do at home. • A few parents expressed concern about the organisation of the Year 3 and Year 4 mixed age classes. • As Key Stage 2 extends over four years, parents would like some additional information about their child's level of work at age nine.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by the parents and carers. As far as homework is concerned, the inspectors consider that this is now dealt with well by the school and pupils receive about the right amount of homework. The use of homework is starting to make a real contribution to raising standards. The school's organisation of the Year 3 and Year 4 age groups means that these pupils are well taught, in separate age groups, for literacy and numeracy. Inspectors agree that it would be helpful to give parents additional information about their child's level of work half way through Key Stage 2.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Throughout the school there is good teaching, with some that is very good, especially in the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lesson. This is particularly effective in raising standards in mathematics and in aspects of English.

1. Across the school, teaching is never less than satisfactory and in five out of ten lessons it is good. In nearly three out of ten lessons it is very good. Teachers' planning is meticulous and thorough. Each subject manager is involved very helpfully in planning their subject in the medium term. The very good quality of this planning ensures that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are systematically taught to all age groups as pupils progress through the school. In the short term, teachers share planning as part of a small group, so sharing ideas, resources, and a range of interesting tasks and activities, which are well matched to pupils' needs. Lessons are well structured and pupils are made aware both of the lesson's objectives and the amount of time they have to complete something. This helps to make pupils responsible and also means that learning proceeds at an appropriately brisk rate. Consequently, pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well.

2. Teachers probe pupils' understanding through highly skilled questioning, for example 'Can you explain how you worked that out?' or 'Can you tell us why you have that opinion?' They organise and manage the pupils very well indeed, and have clear expectations of work, behaviour, perseverance and concentration. As a result, pupils' learning is accelerated as much as possible and they use confidently and competently the skills and knowledge they have learned.

3. Pupils make good progress in acquiring literacy skills, particularly the skills of listening and speaking and reading. Pupils in Year 3 understand the use and purposes of both fiction and non-fiction texts. They are able to use dictionaries confidently to check the spelling or the meaning of a new word. Pupils in Year 4 use language and vocabulary well when writing poetry. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 are sophisticated and fluent readers. Some are able to draw inferences and understand the implicit as well as the explicit meaning of a text. Many but particularly pupils in Year 6 who are able to express their opinions and discuss characters in books thoughtfully, giving cogent reasons; for example, when they are studying a range of autobiography and biography.

4. The pupils are actively encouraged to listen carefully, not only to the teacher but to each other. Teachers listen carefully to pupils' replies and explanations; it is clear to the pupils that their responses are valued, and as a consequence their self confidence and self esteem are enhanced. For example, in singing the pupils are taught to breathe correctly and sing with clear diction, correctly emphasising the endings of words. This has a positive impact on the quality of their speech. Standards of speaking and listening are good.

5. In mathematics, pupils in Years 3 and 4 use the correct mathematical vocabulary carefully when explaining strategies that they have tried. They thoroughly enjoy investigating patterns and sequences in numbers, and are often genuinely excited about their findings. Pupils in Year 6 competently calculate the area and perimeter of a bungalow and its rooms, and are well on the way to understanding the practical importance of mathematics in everyday life. The pupils are organised in ability groups for mathematics: this is having a positive impact on raising standards. These "setting" arrangements are flexible, with regular reviews to ensure that pupils are in the appropriate set. The differences of ability in each ability group are well managed by the teachers, who match the work well to the needs of individuals and groups.

The Headteacher provides very positive and clear sighted leadership. She is very ably supported by the governing body and staff. There is a very strong commitment to teamwork and raising standards. This includes the superb support given to pupils by the learning support assistants, enabling pupils to achieve well.

6. The focus and direction of the school is always on raising standards even further, and securing the best possible quality of education for the pupils. This has been maintained, even through a time of considerable turbulence for the school; two thirds of the teaching staff have changed during the past three years. Responsibilities are clearly delegated. Subject managers are increasingly closely involved in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Particular emphasis has been placed, appropriately, on the core subjects. Targets for improvement and suitable support are negotiated with individual teachers. The school's performance management strategy is very good.

7. Governors have a clear overview of every facet of the school's life. Many visit regularly, either to support in classrooms or to monitor more formally an aspect of school life or the curriculum. Governors are prepared to be constructively critical and are well informed about the school's finances. They are ever conscious of securing best value on behalf of pupils through monitoring the quality of provision. Available resources are well targeted on improving the quality of education provided.

8. Governors, headteacher and staff have a very high commitment to the school. The strong team commitment encourages people to work together actively to make the school as good as it can be on behalf of the pupils. This includes the superb support given to the school and to pupils by the learning support staff. They are knowledgeable, well trained and well managed. They often give over and above that which would normally be expected of them. They make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and therefore to raising standards.

The pupils have very positive attitudes to school. The pupils are taught to be independent and responsible. The adults in the school provide excellent role models and genuinely value the pupils' and their opinions, so enhancing their self-confidence.

9. The pupils' very positive attitudes to school and the opportunities which the school gives them improve their self confidence and help them to realise their full potential. All of the adults in the school treat pupils with the greatest courtesy and respect. Adults genuinely value pupils as individuals. This provides an excellent example to the pupils. Teachers and support staff deal with pupils in a quiet, supportive way but insist that pupils behave well and do their best.

10. Pupils take a good deal of responsibility. Even the youngest manage their personal belongings well when they move to different groups in a different classroom. The librarians are trained to take responsibility for the school library and they carry out their responsibilities well. They have taken the initiative and drawn up a thoughtful questionnaire so that pupils' reading tastes and preferred authors may be reflected in the choice of new purchases for the library. Pupils are able to use confidently a digital camera and operate capably the CD player used in assemblies. The School Council, in which class representatives participate, is a very good opportunity for pupils to practise their good speaking and listening skills. They assiduously research the views of their classmates, and report back regularly to them the views expressed at meetings of the School Council, as responsible representatives. They learn how to consult and canvass views, and about the decision making process.

The school cares for its pupils very well indeed. The quality of pastoral care is especially high. The very good personal, social and health education programme helps pupils' to become mature, thoughtful young people.

11. The staff are keen to help any individual who may be experiencing learning, behavioural or emotional difficulties. Parents are full of praise for the level of care demonstrated, including the school's high level and support for pupils with medical or health difficulties. An integral part of the school's approach to pastoral care is the highly effective 'Buddy' system, in which older pupils make friends with and support the younger pupils. The school trusts its pupils; for example, pupils are given the opportunity to make a responsible choice as to whether they go outside during break, or whether they prefer to remain inside. They are well supervised at all times.

12. The personal, social and health education programme is an integral and important aspect of the school's curriculum. It provides the pupils with opportunities to discuss issues in a mature and reflective way. Issues such as drugs education and the importance of maintaining good health are explored sensitively.

13. There are very good links between the well designed assembly themes and the personal, social and health education curriculum. At the time of the inspection, pupils were exploring feelings and prejudices with great sensitivity. There are effective links with citizenship education, and the pupils are developing an awareness of their responsibility towards others.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Raise standards of writing, which are not as high as in other aspects of English.

14. The school has recognised deficiencies in the range and quality of pupils' writing, through the careful analysis of assessment data and information as part of its own monitoring and self evaluation procedures. In the past, too little time has been spent on teaching the skills and processes of structuring writing. As a result, pupils are not always able to put their thoughts on to paper in a way which does justice to their skill and capacity to articulate their ideas orally. The range and genre of writing opportunities across the curriculum is still rather narrow, though this academic year the staff have begun to look specifically at when writing opportunities can most usefully be planned for across a range of subjects. Also, additional time for writing is now planned into the week. The school has recognised that sometimes there is too little time, in the context of the literacy hour, for pupils to tackle extended writing. The knowledge and understanding gained in looking at texts and developing good reading skills need to be further extended into guided writing. The school's improvement plan outlines appropriate ways in which the school intends to redress these deficiencies.

The presentation of the pupils' recorded work, so that they are more actively encouraged to take pride in their work.

15. The analysis of pupils' recorded work indicates that teachers have different expectations of how pupils should present their work. In mathematics exercise books, sometimes digits and symbols are set out in an untidy manner, or there is unnecessary crossing out. This is detrimental to pupils' mathematical understanding. Whilst there is an agreed set of criteria for indicating when pupils may begin to use pen rather than pencil (their 'pen passport'), even in Year 6, pupils rarely use pen when writing. Use of pen tends to be reserved for pupils doing 'best copies' rather than regularly practising and improving their techniques for writing in pen. Joined handwriting is taught, but a significant minority of pupils in Year 6 do not yet use consistently a joined, legible style of handwriting. Sometimes, left

handed pupils are seated too close to a right handed pupil, which makes it difficult for the left handed pupil to present the work well. Pupils are sometimes reminded by the teacher to 'make their work neater' but they are given too little assistance as to how they might improve the presentation of their work. There are too few examples of well written, well presented work on display to set the standard and exemplify the school's expectations.

As part of teachers' regular assessments of pupils' work, ensure that marking comments state not only what pupils have done well but what needs to be improved; marking is only rarely directed at helping pupils' assess their progress towards their individual targets.

16. The school has been reviewing its target setting processes and is developing some most useful procedures. Teachers mark the pupils' work regularly, but the comments focus mainly on what the pupil has achieved. Whilst this is an essential aspect of marking, there is too little marking which is diagnostic and rigorous. Only rarely do the teacher's written comments make reference to what precisely should be improved, how the pupil may help him or herself to get better at something, or assist the pupils to assess whether or not they have made progress towards their individual targets.

17. In mathematics, the marking makes few references to the quality of mathematical understanding or the pupils' progress in learning a new skill. In science, teachers comment mainly on the spelling or layout; only occasionally are comments related to the scientific content, or the way a pupil may have set about a scientific investigation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To improve standards even further, the governors, headteacher and staff should draw up an action plan to address the following issues:

- (1) Continue to improve standards of writing by:
 - implementing the useful strategies outlined in School Improvement Plan.
- (2) Improve the quality of presentation of the pupils' recorded work by:
 - agreeing the school's standards and expectations of presentation;
 - monitoring the quality of the presentation of pupils' recorded work.
- (3) Improve the helpfulness of teachers' marking of pupils' work by:
 - providing clear guidance to pupils about what needs to be improved;
 - helping pupils to understand how the marking of their work can help them to assess their progress towards their individual targets;
 - ensuring that both pupils and parents are informed about the way teachers use marking to be helpful and support improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	11	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	27	50	23	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3-6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		232
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3-6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		59

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	92.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	94.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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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 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	27	26	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	23	27
	Girls	21	16	24
	Total	41	39	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (80)	74 (75)	96 (98)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	20	25
	Girls	21	17	21
	Total	38	37	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (77)	70 (70)	87 (89)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	226
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	29.0

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134.75

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	2	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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	467283
Total expenditure	473448
Expenditure per pupil	2015
Balance brought forward from previous year	31290
Balance carried forward to next year	25125

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	232
Number of questionnaires returned	81

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	41	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	43	2	1	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	62	2	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	53	16	1	9
The teaching is good.	44	50	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	52	11	2	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62.	32	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	47	1	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	30	56	7	1	6
The school is well led and managed.	42	43	1	0	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	47	1	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	43	11	2	14