

INSPECTION REPORT

DUNCTON C of E FIRST SCHOOL

DUNCTON, PETWORTH

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125980

Headteacher: Mr. N. White

Reporting inspector: Mr. R. Passant - 2728

Dates of inspection: May 23rd to May 24th 2001

Inspection number: 197767

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-10 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Willett Close Duncton Petworth West Sussex
Postcode:	GU28 OLB
Telephone number:	01798 342402
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. D. Withers
Date of previous inspection:	29.9.97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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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	12
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a controlled Church of England First School for pupils aged four to ten years old. There are 61 pupils and it is much smaller than average. About half of the pupils travel to the school from the surrounding rural areas south of Petworth. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. All pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage and no pupils are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is well below the national average and no pupil has a formal statement of special educational needs. There has been a period of change after a long period of stability. The former headteacher moved on to pursue his career after 23 years at the school and an acting headteacher was appointed for one term. The present headteacher took up his post in January 2001. A registered pre-school playgroup operates at the school. Pupils at the end of Year 5 transfer to the local middle school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Duncton First School is a good and effective school. It is led well and all members of staff work hard together to provide a secure and happy place where the pupils thrive. Good and often very good teaching ensures that pupils enjoy learning, make good progress and achieve well, many attaining high standards by the time they move onto the middle school. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school promotes very good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. Adults know the pupils very well; there are very good relationships and a very high degree of care.
- Teaching is good and often very good.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The school is led well. There is strong teamwork and commitment to further improvement by all members of staff.

What could be improved

- Schemes of work, so that they provide effective support to teacher planning, particularly in Key Stage 2
- The accommodation for the junior class and provision of outdoor space for children under-five.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the school was last inspected in September 1997. High standards have been maintained. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and has addressed the key issues identified in the previous report, although the child protection policy needs formalisation. Pupils who find learning easier than their peers are now being challenged appropriately in the work being demanded of them. After a long period of stability, the Governing Body has managed the period of change well.

STANDARDS

Because the numbers taking the National Curriculum tests in 2000 for seven year-olds were less than 10, a table comparing the school's results to national averages has been omitted.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Five-year-olds are on course to meet or exceed the learning goals for young children and are beginning to work at the early stages of the National Curriculum. By the age of seven, standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics in the National Curriculum tests for 2000. The results of the tests in reading are in the highest five per cent of schools nationally. The results are also well above average when compared to similar schools, that is schools which have a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Good progress continues in the junior section of the school and pupils achieve good standards in English, mathematics and science. They are prepared well for the transition to middle school. The school has identified the further improvement of writing at the higher levels as a priority. Although there is some variation year on year reflecting the performance of individual pupils, high standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

Overall, standards in subjects such as information and communication technology, history, geography, are at least in line with expectations. The school improvement plan identifies information and communication technology as a development area.

The school sets itself challenging targets. In 2001, it met these for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 (the expected level for seven year-olds) but did not quite meet its target for reading and writing at Level 3 for this age group. The school matched the targets for the percentage of Year 5 pupils achieving Level 4 (the expected level for eleven year-olds) in reading and writing and it exceeded the targets in mathematics.

Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress against their targets. All pupils are given appropriately demanding work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school and to their learning are very good. They are enthusiastic and engage in work with interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, behaviour around the school is very good and often exemplary. Behaviour in classrooms is generally very good and never slips below a good standard.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults working in the school are very good. Members of staff know all the pupils well and are very supportive. They are very good role models. Courtesy and co-operation are strong features of the school.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average but the school is actively working to improve attendance and, overall, it is satisfactory.

The high quality of relationships and members of staff knowledge of all the pupils provide the foundation for developing pupils' sense of self-esteem and confidence with their work.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-10 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching was good in 67 per cent of lessons and very good in 33 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Across the school, the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and pupils make good progress as a result.

Teachers have a very good understanding of young children and their language needs. Members of staff have a detailed knowledge of the pupils so that they are able to anticipate when a particular pupil may find something difficult and can prepare accordingly. They provide sensitive support to individuals. This support, and the overall very advantageous adult to pupil ratio for very young children and in the infant class ensures that all pupils, including pupils identified as having special educational needs, make good progress and are provided with a very good foundation on which later learning is built.

Teaching is well planned and organised and makes effective use of support staff. Work is structured well and carefully matched to the pupils to provide appropriate challenge. The school uses a flexible approach, sometimes grouping pupils by ability or by age according to the needs of the lesson. It also makes effective use of individual teachers' strengths and interests to teach to different groups. Teachers have high expectations and make good use of praise to motivate and encourage pupils. There is good teamwork with support staff. Pupils approach their work with interest, concentrate well and work at a good pace.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Teachers work hard to provide a broad and interesting curriculum. Very young children are provided with a curriculum, which covers all the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. In the infant and junior classes all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught. Schemes of work, particularly in English and information and communication technology need revising and updating to ensure that the schemes provide effective support to teacher planning. Extra-curricular activities, including a French class, are developing and the use of trips extends the range of curriculum opportunity.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good. Individual education plans are in place. Individual pupils receive support in and out of class. Potential difficulties with individual pupils are anticipated. The learning support assistant has had additional training in special educational needs. There are good links with Local Education Authority agencies which provide specialist advice.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, there is good provision. The school works hard to develop pupils' sense of self worth and provides opportunities for them to reflect on their lives and the lives of others. The provision for moral and social development is very good. Overall, the provision for cultural development is good, although developing a greater awareness and understanding of the cultural diversity of society remains an aspect for development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes great care of its pupils. The very supportive ethos founded on the high quality of relationships ensures that pupils feel secure and happy. The child protection policy has not yet been formalised.

The school works closely with parents, listening to any concerns that they might have. The school is integrated well into the local community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is led well. The headteacher is clear about the changes and improvements he would like to introduce. There are clear priorities identified in the five-term school improvement plan. There is a strong sense of teamwork at the school and commitment from all staff to further improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have managed well a period of change after a very long period of stability. The Governing Body is very supportive of the school and brings a range of personal and professional experience to the task. The chair and vice-chair have a clear understanding of governance. Overall, the Governing Body is developing in confidence to take an active role in setting the strategic direction, monitoring school improvements and holding the school to account.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher undertakes informal and formal monitoring of lessons in association with the local education authority who have looked at numeracy and literacy. Medium-term planning is monitored regularly. The school makes use of comparative information to verify standards. A more formalised approach to monitoring is developing.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well. Learning resources are stored well and accessible. Specific grants are used well

The school applies the principles of best value on any major expenditure. There are accommodation issues, which the school has identified. The current junior classroom is cramped and has poor acoustics and is generally a difficult room to manage. The school plans to create a new classroom in the current library space. Currently the children under-five lack a dedicated outdoor space to extend the range of the curriculum throughout the year.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school and are making good progress and get the right amount of work to do at home.• The teaching is good and the school is helping their children become mature and responsible.• They feel comfortable about approaching the school and feel that the school is well led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More information about how their child is getting on.• Closer working with parents.
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Overall, parents have very positive views of the school which are supported by the inspection team. Five parents felt that the information about how their child is getting on could be improved and six parents wanted a closer working relationship. The school does seek to work in close partnership with parents. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt that reports were detailed and there were opportunities to talk to staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school promotes very good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. Adults know the pupils very well and there are very good relationships and a very high degree of care.

1. The school has a relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere. All members of staff know all the children, greeting them as they arrive and, throughout the day, outside lessons, pupils chat happily to adults about their work and what they are doing outside school. At the start of the day pupils bounce happily into school and settle to classroom routines quickly. They are interested in their work and want to do well.

2. Whilst the small size of the school is a factor, nevertheless, the ethos is carefully constructed. Members of staff act as very good role models. Courtesy, mutual respect and co-operation are the expected norms. Members of staff listen to pupils and are vigilant, should a pupil be upset for any reason. Praise and encouragement reinforce effectively pupils' positive attitudes. In a mathematics lesson, for example, younger pupils had to play a number logic game to find out a particular number by asking questions without using 'between' 'before' or 'after'. If a pupil made a mistake it was used positively. The upshot was that the pupils evidently enjoyed their mathematics and were enthusiastic and interested, encouraged by an ethos, which stressed that 'we all learn by making mistakes'. In another class, pupils recalled the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. They listened very well to each other, responded to questions, clearly enjoying the story. They laughed together and giggled at incidents and were clearly confident. Older pupils worked together well, sustained by the teacher's skilled questions, conducting their science experiments, filtering solids using a range of natural products, and remained engaged in their task, despite a very hot and stuffy classroom.

3. Pupils are happy at the school. At play-time they race around the playground space or chat together. At lunch-time they seek out their favourite spot to eat their lunches with their friends. Their behaviour around the school is often exemplary and never less than very good. The inspection coincided with some very good weather and pupils relaxed on the field with the school staff, content in the idyllic setting, yet settling equally happily to the afternoon session.

4. Members of staff work hard to ensure that learning is interesting and fun. They encourage and motivate pupils to do their best and develop an ethos, which fosters an individual pupil's confidence and sense of self-worth. Above all, they provide a warm, safe and secure atmosphere where pupils thrive.

Teaching is good and often very good.

5. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is often very good. It is the consistent good and often very good teaching which ensures that pupils make good

progress. In the relatively small sample of lessons seen during the inspection, one-third was very good and two-thirds good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen.

6. Teaching the mixed-age classes is a challenge, which the teachers meet well. The structure, planning and organisation of lessons are very detailed and often very impressive. Considerable expertise, experience and energy are invested in planning and organisation so that lessons proceed with a smoothness which is deceptive. Learning support assistants are used effectively in the main, working alongside individuals or groups, and there is good teamwork so that learning support assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

7. Teachers have a very good understanding of young children and their language needs, for example, accurate recording ensures that phonic work is developed carefully. In one lesson based on 'The Hungry Caterpillar', after having been reminded by one five year-old that the caterpillar's diet was 'not very healthy', children went on to write their own story in individually prepared 'books' with the learning support assistants and the teacher each working with four children. The children made very good progress because of the high quality of one-to-one support they received.

8. Work is structured well and carefully matched to the pupils to provide appropriate challenge. The school uses a flexible approach, sometimes grouping pupils by ability or by age according to the needs of the lesson. Older pupils, working on the election, for example, considered in their groups the facts and opinion in a range of sentences. Work was carefully matched to the groups' attainment. The detail of planning with regard to the extracts was of very high quality and ensured that pupils in the groups were appropriately challenged. The school also makes effective use of individual teacher's strengths and interests to teach to different groups.

9. Members of staff have a detailed knowledge of pupils so that they not only provide sensitive support to individuals but also anticipate any difficulties a pupil might have. As a result, across the school pupils identified as having special educational needs are given good support and make good progress against their targets.

10. Teachers have good classroom skills. Pupils are given a clear understanding of what they are about to do and why and at the end of the lesson teachers review what pupils have learnt. Questioning skills are good and carefully targeted to individuals. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to maintain pupils' enthusiasm and interest. Explanations and demonstrations are clear and there is a good emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary. Younger children, for example, identify through skilled questioning the differences between being 'cross' and 'angry'; and older pupils use 'constituency', 'candidate' and 'media' by the end of the lesson with confidence. Across the school teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve are high. Pupils are expected to make good progress. Pupil management is very skilled and lessons conducted at a well-judged pace so that pupils remain confident, engaged and interested and make good progress.

Pupils make good progress and achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science.

11. Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress against their prior attainment or targets. Standards of work in English, Mathematics and science are appropriately demanding.

12. Across the school, standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils are attentive and listen well to their teachers and each other, although the acoustics in the junior classroom sometimes make this difficult. Pupils are confident to express their ideas and views and in answering questions. Very young children have good opportunities to talk to adults, and they are helped to organise their thoughts. They listen to others carefully and contribute to the telling of their news. Older pupils listen carefully to each other, participate in discussions about their work and question others' ideas.

13. Standards of reading are very good. Very young children are able to 'read' the missing words from a text and know about the author and illustrator of the book. Phonic work is carefully planned. Reading books are carefully structured and there is an inbuilt encouragement to read more demanding texts. The school gives considerable emphasis to the development of reading. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, the pupils achieved standards in the highest five per cent of schools nationally. All pupils achieve Level 2 (the level that is expected for seven year-olds) and half the pupils achieve Level 3. In the voluntary tests that the school takes for Year 5 pupils over half of the pupils achieved Level 4 (the expected level for pupils at the end of Year 6.) There is a satisfactory range of readers for those pupils reading independently. The school plans to increase the range.

14. Standards in writing are good and the school improvement plan has targeted this for further improvement. Very young children exceed the learning goals for five-year-olds in this, as in all other aspects, and are working at the early stages of the National Curriculum by the time they are five. By the age of seven standards in writing are well above the national average, as indicated in the National Curriculum tests in 2000. In the scrutiny of work, pupils show good progress in handwriting. Pupils are able to sequence sentences and are beginning to paragraph their work and use speech marks and other punctuation confidently, although not always consistently. One pupil wrote a brief description of a person important to her in joined neat handwriting:

15. 'My granny has curly hair. She always wears a shirt and trousers. She gives us chocolate when we come round for tea. My granny has grey hair. She smiles at me when I come round. We play some games that were hers when she was a child.'

16. In the voluntary tests for Year 5 in May, all pupils achieved a confident Level 3 in writing and just under half had achieved a Level 4. Pupils write for a range of purposes, for example writing about an interview with a famous person, a piece of writing imagining life in a Victorian workhouse or descriptive poetry:

'Little puffed up sparrows huddle close
Icicles hang off the trees
The houses are covered in lights
Crunchy frost covers the ground.'

17. The writing shows increasing accuracy in spelling and pupils manage complex punctuation well, paragraphing their work.

18. Standards in mathematics are well above the national average and above that of similar schools by the time pupils are seven years old. The school met its target of half of the pupils reaching the higher level. By the end of Year 5, almost all pupils achieve Level 3 and the majority achieve the expected level for eleven-year-olds. In a mathematics lesson, for example, almost all Year 5 pupils had grasped the difference between rotation and transformation and were working securely at expected standards for the end of Key Stage 2.

19. Standards in science are very high. In a lesson with very young children based on the differences and similarities of different seeds, children were well on their way to exceeding the Early Learning Goals as a stepping stone to working within National Curriculum Level 1. By the age of seven, all pupils achieved the expected level and according to the 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessments and half of the group achieved the higher level.

20. In a lesson on filtration, Year 5 pupils were working within Level 4. They clearly understood the requirements of a fair test and how to set up the experiment. They showed an understanding of materials and their properties. Work in books is presented well and shows a very good understanding of scientific terminology.

The school is led well. There is strong teamwork and commitment to further improvement by all members of staff.

21. The recently appointed headteacher brings significant skills to the post. He has approached his task with sensitivity, aware of the legacy of an effective school and yet clear that there are aspects he wishes to develop and improve. He is reflective, recognising the strengths of the very strong informal systems, which operate successfully within this school, but aware that some aspects need greater formalisation – especially those concerned with ongoing evaluation of the school and the school's performance. The school development plan establishes clear priorities and gives a clear direction for the school. It is focused on standards.

22. Staff work together well and are generous in support of each other. Teamwork is very effective. All members of staff are very committed to the pupils and want to do the best by them. This focus to their work means that they are outward-looking and want to develop their professional skills. The commitment to on-going school improvement is very strong.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Schemes of work so that they provide effective support to teacher planning; and adequate time for the teaching of each subject, to be determined by an audit.

23. The school development plan identifies the need to establish a whole-school policy on teaching and learning. As part of that process, the school should review the schemes of work for subjects in a phased programme. Initially this review should focus on English and information and communication technology particularly for Key Stage 2 who, because of the three-year age groups in the class, follow a rolling three-year programme. Currently the effectiveness of the schemes of work to support a teacher's planning is variable. Some are written for an unspecified audience, rather than as working documents designed to help and support the classroom teacher.

The accommodation for the junior class and provision of outdoor space for children under five

24. The headteacher has identified the need to make changes to the school's accommodation and the local education authority is also planning a minor works programme to improve the entrance hall.

25. The junior classroom is not an easy space to manage and the acoustics are poor so that pupils find it difficult to hear each other in discussion.

26. Currently very young children lack a dedicated outdoor space that they can use easily throughout the year to extend the range of curriculum provision. This too has been recognised by the school and is on the plans for improving the outdoor environment of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

27. To build further on the strengths of this good and effective school the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) improve the support for teacher's curriculum planning by
 - a. establishing a three-year rolling programme and scheme of work for
 - i. English at Key Stage 2;
 - ii. information and communication technology at Key Stage 2;
 - b. prioritising and planning reviews of other schemes of work over time to ensure that they are effective working aids to teacher planning;
- (2) enhance the teaching space for the junior class;
- (3) seek to develop an outdoor curriculum space for very young children.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	12
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	33	67	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	YR – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		61
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		4

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	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.2

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	3	5	8

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	8	8	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100(100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	8	8	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	61
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR–5

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.7
Average class size	29.5

Education support staff: YR–Y5

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	83

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	186207
Total expenditure	191241
Expenditure per pupil	3298
Balance brought forward from previous year	15079

Balance carried forward to next year	10045
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Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	42
Number of questionnaires returned	21

Percentage of responses in each category¹

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	33	10	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	52	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	43	5	0	0
The teaching is good.	59	33	8	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	33	24	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	43	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	29	29	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	47	38	9	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	57	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	67	9	0	5

¹ Figures may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.