INSPECTION REPORT

THE TYRRELLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Springfield, Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115022

Headteacher: Mrs Valerie Thompson

Reporting inspector: Mrs Karen Finney (Ofsted No: 23163)

Dates of inspection: 30 October - 1 November 2000

Inspection number: 224242

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Tavistock Road

Springfield Chelmsford Essex

Postcode: CM1 6JN

Telephone number: 01245 355226

Fax number: 01245 280044

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Jean Patterson

Date of previous inspection: 13 - 17 January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			
Karen Finney	Registered inspector		
(Ofsted No: 23163)			
Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector		
(Ofsted No: 14347)			
Anne Dancer	Team inspector		
(Ofsted No: 20848)			
Mary Hutton	Team inspector		
(Ofsted No: 24009)			

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Limited Demeter House Station Road Cambridge CB1 2RS

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The Registrar Inspection Quality Division The Office for Standards in Education Alexandra House 33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Tyrrells is a large primary school for boys and girls aged between four and eleven years. It has 415 pupils on roll, including 38 children attending part-time (for morning or afternoon sessions) in the reception classes. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

Over 60 per cent of pupils are from outside the immediate catchment area. Most pupils come from favourable socio-economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (3.7 per cent) is below the national average. The majority of pupils are from a white ethnic background. Very few pupils have English as an additional language and none is at an early stage of language acquisition. Twenty four pupils (6 per cent) are on the special educational needs register, which is well below the national average. Only one pupil has a statement of special educational need, a proportion below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Tyrrells is a very successful school. The leadership provided by the headteacher, senior staff and governors, has brought about a school committed to continuous development and improvement. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well in English, mathematics and science and have well developed personal and social skills. The quality of teaching is very good, overall, and inspires pupils to work hard and achieve their best. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they are eleven.
- There is a very strong leadership team, including governors, committed to staff development and continuous improvements.
- The teaching is very good, overall, particularly for the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and attitudes to learning are very good.
- Staff work effectively to promote pupils' personal and social skills.

What could be improved

• There are no significant areas for improvement.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected in 1997 it was judged to be a rapidly improving school. Very good progress has been made since then in raising and maintaining high standards and in responding to the key issues for improvement. The school has achieved and maintained at least above average standards in English, and well above average standards in mathematics and science, over the last three years. Schemes of work have been completed for all subjects. Teachers' planning is checked to ensure that it is carried out in practice and care is taken to plan and provide work suitable for pupils of differing abilities. There has been a substantial improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. This is largely due to the increased effectiveness of the leadership team in developing and promoting good practice throughout the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

	compared with				
Performance in:		similar schools			
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A*	Α	В	С	
Mathematics	A*	А	Α	В	
Science	A*	А	А	А	

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

English, mathematics and science test results have remained well above the national average from 1998-2000 (with the exception of English test results in the year 2000 which were above average). Results in all these subjects were very high (in the top five per cent nationally - A*) in 1998. In 2000, results were well above when compared with schools with pupils from a similar background, in science, and above in mathematics. In English, results were in line with those achieved in similar schools, but above those achieved in schools with similar prior attainment (similar results at Key Stage 1 in 1996). Results in mathematics and science were well above when compared with schools with similar prior attainment. The school has met or slightly exceeded its ambitious targets for English and mathematics test results over the last two years.

The inspection found that standards are high throughout the school, in English, mathematics and science, with girls and boys of all abilities achieving well. Children make very good progress in the reception classes and are already achieving a good standard of work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment	
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show very positive attitudes to school and concentrate well in lessons.	
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. This has a very beneficial effect on pupils' learning and life in the school.	
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are happy to accept responsibilities. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are excellent.	
Attendance	Good. Above the national average.	

The majority of pupils are very keen to learn and eager to contribute to lessons. They take pride in their work. Pupils of all ages show great respect for each other and adults.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils: aged up to 5 years		aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	ons seen overall Very good		Very 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.

Overall, the quality of teaching is very good and pupils make very good progress in their learning. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and 85 per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better. Thirty one per cent of lessons were very good and eight per cent were excellent.

The teaching of children in the foundation stage (reception classes) is very good largely because of the very careful planning, organisation and presentation of activities. The teaching of basic skills, particularly literacy and numeracy, is very good throughout the school. Teachers plan well for pupils of all abilities and provide interesting activities to stimulate pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good additional teaching support, particularly in literacy and mathematics, and this aids their progress. Overall, pupils are learning well, especially in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment		
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned. There is a good range of additional activities outside lessons, although these are mainly for older pupils in the school.		
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good, particularly for the development of literacy and numeracy skills.		
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language are well integrated in the school and supported by the very good teaching in literacy.		
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development, particularly their moral and social development. This contributes to the very positive ethos in the school.		
How well the school cares for its pupils The school provides a safe and caring environment for all pupils to Staff know the pupils very well and give them good support and gu to help them achieve well.			

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment	
Leadership and manage- ment by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership by the headteacher gives clear direction to the development and success of the school. Staff share a strong commitment to the ongoing improvement of the school and provide effective support.	
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body are well informed and very actively involved in the key areas of staff recruitment and professional development.	
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes very good use of assessment data in the core subjects to judge success and identify areas for improvement. There is an established and effective system for monitoring the quality of teaching.	

The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are used well to promote school improvement. The school regularly compares its success with others to ensure that it obtains best value from spending decisions.		
1000011000			

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved	
 Their children like school. The school achieves high academic standards and children make good progress in their learning. The school works hard to encourage children to achieve their best. Behaviour is good. 	·	

The inspection team found that parents are justified in what pleases them most about the school. The school has a clear homework policy but there are some differences in the quantity and subject matter of homework given by different teachers in the same year group. The range of extra-curricular activities is good for older pupils in the school. However, the method of selecting pupils for clubs that are oversubscribed is not always clear to parents or pupils. There are good formal arrangements for parents to find out about the school and their children's progress, but a small minority of parents perceive that informal access is restricted by the school's procedures for dropping off and collecting children at the school gate. Inspection findings are that parents are not prevented from speaking informally to teachers but that there are some inconsistencies in the way teachers use home reading record books to communicate with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they are eleven

- 1. Pupils enter school with broadly average levels of attainment. Boys and girls of all abilities make very good progress as a result of the very good teaching they receive. Most pupils achieve the standards expected for their age and many achieve well above this level by the time they leave. National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 2 have remained well above the national average over the last three years (with the exception of English test results in 2000 which were above the average) and results in the year 2000 were above or well above those achieved in schools with similar Key Stage 1 results in 1996.
- 2. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils have highly developed speaking skills and express their ideas clearly and confidently. They respond to questions thoughtfully and justify their point of view by giving relevant examples. They read with fluency and accuracy from a range of texts and express clear preferences with reasoning. They show a high level of understanding of figurative language, easily identifying similes, metaphors and personification, in poems by Philip Larkin, for example. Pupils have already completed a wide range of written work, including stories, summaries, playscripts and writing from different points of view. Many use vocabulary skilfully in their own writing. For example, one pupil included the following in an imaginative story:

Down the creaky, copper stairs they tiptoed and took a melted lit candle into the dark scary room, where the broken armchairs were so gigantic they could fit six people.

Another pupil wrote:

A gigantic, blazing fire was burning with tiny shooting stars escaping out the side. Everyone around could feel the warmth spreading over them like butter onto bread....

- 3. In mathematics, pupils have a very good understanding of the number system and use this to calculate the difference between pairs of numbers, including negative numbers. In a Year 6 lesson pupils responded enthusiastically to the teacher's skilful questioning and explained their answers with clear reasoning. Over half the class were working at an above average level in their use of coordinates in four quadrants. The most able pupils used their knowledge of algebra to identify patterns in equations. At the end of the lesson pupils used well developed mathematical reasoning skills to investigate and explain mathematical patterns in coordinates to each other.
- 4. In science, pupils have a very good level of knowledge and understanding, about, for example, how the human body works. This is demonstrated in their use of tracing overlays to show bone structure, muscles and the blood system, also in their writing about the digestive system from a strawberry's point of view! Pupils have well developed investigative skills, including the ability to predict and draw conclusions. Their recording skills show a high level of precision and accuracy.

There is a very strong leadership team, including governors, committed to staff development and continuous improvements

- 5. Effective leadership by the headteacher and senior staff is a key factor in the progress the school has made in recent years. The headteacher's great strength is in seeing the potential in staff employed by the school, and in guiding and nurturing that potential. This has resulted in a strong leadership team and staff clearly committed to the success and ongoing improvement of the school.
- 6. There are well established arrangements for meetings between the headteacher, senior staff and teachers to ensure that all aspects of school development are discussed and all teachers can make clear and relevant contributions to improvements being made. Senior staff take

responsibility for trialling new developments, such as for marking and target setting. These trials are then evaluated and their success discussed at team meetings to ensure that the agreed policies are appropriate for all year groups and successfully implemented.

- 7. A culture has been developed which encourages staff to reflect on and evaluate all that they do. There is an established and accepted structure for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching through a scrutiny of teachers' planning, classroom observations, feedback and support (including the opportunity to observe demonstration lessons). This has resulted in a substantial improvement in the quality of teaching and a teaching staff who are self evaluative and always seeking to improve the quality of what they do.
- 8. There is a strong commitment to future improvement shared by all teachers, reflected in clear action plans for each subject included in the Tyrrells School Development Plan. In particular there is a commitment to further raising standards in English and mathematics, seen in the detailed analysis of test data. This has resulted in clear and specific targets for improvement being identified for each year group. This is being further developed through the school's current focus on constructive and developmental marking procedures and target setting for individual pupils. The trialling of this system has already resulted in some pupils' having a very clear idea of what they need to concentrate on to improve the standard of their work. The increased involvement of pupils in their own learning is linked to another focus for development, which is the enhancement of pupils' self esteem. This is being developed through fortnightly 'circle time' and plans to develop a school council.
- 9. Governors make a strong contribution to the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school. They are very well informed about the school's work through meetings and the 'Adopt a Governor' scheme (whereby each governor is linked to a particular class in the school). They have been very closely involved in recent developments, such as the re-organisation of the early years unit, and play a very active role in the appointment of staff and staff development. They are well prepared for their increased responsibilities in reviewing the performance of the headteacher.

The teaching is very good overall, particularly for the basic skills of literacy and numeracy

- 10. A significant factor in the very good achievement of pupils of all abilities is the good quality of much of the teaching. The overall quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. Teaching was judged to be good or better in 85 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 31 per cent. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good.
- 11. The most effective lessons are characterised by teachers' very good knowledge and expertise in the subject being taught. This results in lively and interesting class introductions and activities which inspire pupils' interest and enthusiasm. There are clear and high expectations of what pupils of all abilities should achieve. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, which motivates pupils' confidence and respect. This results in a very good working atmosphere in which pupils are keen to work hard and achieve their best.
- 12. Subject expertise was a particular strength in English and mathematics lessons in Year 6. In one example, the teacher captivated the attention of all pupils by providing interesting background information about a particular poet. He captured the meaning and effect of the poem by quoting particular examples. A particularly poignant moment was created when the teacher suggested a possible interpretation of the meaning of Larkin's poem 'Blizzard' through sensitive personal commentary and explanation. This enabled pupils to *feel* the more eerie undercurrents of the poem beyond the literal meaning. In another lesson the teacher's very good subject knowledge enabled her to explain and give examples of 'abstract nouns'. She posed challenging and well thought out questions to help pupils identify the impact of particular figures of speech, such as similes and metaphors. In a mathematics lesson the teacher effectively involved all pupils in understanding a complex concept through well targeted questions. This enabled every pupil to succeed and become totally absorbed in identifying and presenting reasons for their answers. In an ICT lesson in Year 3, the teacher's knowledge and expertise enabled her to present the new and challenging task of importing pictures into text with a simple and practical demonstration

using a clipboard, pictures and scissors. In the subsequent activity pupils were provided with effective support and guidance in developing their own skills by both the class teacher and the learning support assistant, who has the confidence and knowledge to support pupils at different stages of learning.

- 13. High expectation was a positive feature of a mathematics lesson in Year 2 where the teacher encouraged pupils to explain the thinking behind their answers, rather than just giving an answer. It was also evident in the challenging pace of many lessons.
- 14. The very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils was a key factor in the quality of learning in many lessons. For example, in a personal and social education lesson in Year 6, the teacher had established a very good rapport with pupils. Pupils responded accordingly, showing respect and maturity in talking about things they liked about themselves and each other. No time was lost in dealing with inappropriate behaviour, so the pace and learning from the lesson were maximised.
- 15. A high level of interest and concentration is promoted through careful planning and organisation of activities. This was very evident in a literacy session for part-time pupils in the reception classes. A range of interesting activities, including a rice tray for experimental 'writing', games, lotto and puzzles, and very good adult interaction, inspired children's interest and sustained concentration. All adults are skilful at asking questions and participating in children's 'play' to promote maximum learning. In a geography lesson in Year 4, pupils showed a high level of interest in their practical work on noise levels in different parts of the school at different times, leading to an understanding of how people influence their environment.
- 16. Pupils of all abilities learn well because teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' capabilities. Questions and feedback are well targeted to ensure that pupils experience success and challenge. This was a strong feature of Year 6 English lessons and in the marking of pupils' work, which gives clear praise and guidance about what could be improved. For example 'I like your attention to detail.....and your imaginative use of vocabulary > Try to use language tools more to bring the description and action to life'. Very well focused support was provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator in an individual support session. There were very clear and specific learning objectives for the lesson and the teacher's enthusiastic manner and guidance encouraged the pupil to feel confident and keen about learning.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent and attitudes to learning are very good

- 17. Pupils enjoy coming to school and inspection evidence indicates that they are very keen to learn and extremely well behaved.
- 18. Even the youngest children show a high level of interest and concentration. For example, after sitting in assembly, reception children responded very well to a class literacy session. They held up their hands, as reminded, and answered questions enthusiastically. They worked very sensibly with each other, sharing glue sticks and seeking advice, such as 'What does this say?' and 'Can anyone show me where Biff is?', in their follow-up activities. Throughout the school pupils have a very positive attitude to their work. They listen attentively and with interest to their teachers and show a keen response to answering questions. They try very hard to achieve their best and show pleasure in discussing their work with adults. Pupils' motivation and responsiveness in lessons are major factors in their high achievement.
- 19. Pupils are extremely well behaved in and around the school. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour or even over-boisterous behaviour in the playground. Pupils play happily together and stop immediately the whistle is blown to go into their class. As they move about the school, pupils hold doors for others and for adults. Pupils passing through say *'Thank you'* which receives the response of *'You're welcome'*. The relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are very impressive. Adults treat pupils with a high level of respect and pupils respond accordingly. Pupils show respect for one another. For example, they said something kind and thoughtful about the person next to them in a personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson.

Staff work effectively to promote pupils' personal and social skills

- 20. There is a strong commitment by all staff to pupils' personal and social development. As a result, pupils are well behaved, self confident and there is a happy and friendly atmosphere in the school.
- 21. Very good provision is made for pupils to develop social skills beyond the classroom. For example, older pupils escort visiting parents around the school and answer questions that they might have. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils are well briefed and able to handle any enquiries. Older pupils also provide a 'family service' to other pupils at lunchtime, whereby they help to serve and clear away the meal. They are very clear that they should encourage pupils to eat but that 'They don't have to eat vegetables if they don't want!' The provision of extra-curricular activities, for older pupils in the school, provides good opportunities for pupils to socialise with each other and adults outside lessons. Some clubs, such as for gym (early morning groups) and football, provide opportunities for a selected team of pupils to perform and play at local and national levels.
- 22. Staff work very hard to ensure that personal and social skills are well promoted for all pupils in lessons. Pupils are very well motivated to show respect for others as a result of the relationships among pupils and between staff and pupils in the school. Teachers show great respect and appreciation for pupils' personal effort in lessons. This is also reflected in the high quality of displays around the school. As a result, pupils feel confident that their contributions will be valued and work hard themselves to show appreciation for one another's work and personal qualities. There are very good opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas and what they have learned with each other. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils worked in pairs to investigate mathematical problems. In a Year 4 geography lesson pupils were encouraged to discuss their findings from a noise survey and prepare a presentation to the class.
- 23. The school is currently trialling and developing other initiatives to support pupils' self esteem and social skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 act as writing partners to each other and the PSHE action plan includes plans for peer mentoring for reading in Years 4 and 5 and the establishment of a school council.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

24. There are no significant areas for improvement. During the inspection, though, it was observed that some lessons started late and/or finished early. For example, a 'literacy hour' lesson was timetabled for 75 minutes but only lasted 60 minutes. The additional fifteen minutes was not used as productively as it could have been.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

25. To build on its many strengths and support the school's drive for improvement, the school staff and governors should consider how to make the best use of time before and after lessons. (See paragraph 24)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

:	26
	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	31	46	15	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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		396
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		24

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	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	25	35	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Boys	24	23	25
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	35	35	35
	Total	59	58	60
Percentage of pupils	School	98 (97)	97 (97)	100 (95)
at NC level 2 or above	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		sments English Mathematics		Science
	Boys	25	25	26
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	34	34	34
	Total	59	59	60
Percentage of pupils	School	98 (97)	98 (97)	100 (98)
at NC level 2 or above	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	28	33	61

National Curriculum T	National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Mathematics	Science
	Boys	25	27	28
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	30	28	31
	Total	55	55	59
Percentage of pupils	School	90 (91)	90 (97)	96 (95)
at NC level 4 or above	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	25	27	28
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	32	31	32
	Total	57	58	60
Percentage of pupils	School	93 (89)	95 (92)	98 (95)
at NC level 4 or above	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	1
Black - other	4
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	367
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.6		
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25		
Average class size	30		

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	188

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

1999/2000	
£	
705591	
676399	
1611	
78191	
107383	

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	430
Number of questionnaires returned	191

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	45	2	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	37	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	50	13	2	4
The teaching is good.	54	41	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	56	12	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	36	8	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	39	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	31	51	13	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	57	36	4	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	39	3	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	39	19	5	13