

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**OTLEY STREET NURSERY SCHOOL**

**SKIPTON**

**LEA area: North Yorkshire**

**Unique reference number: 121269**

**Headteacher: Mrs E. Sellers**

Reporting inspector: Michael Hewlett  
1569

Dates of inspection: Tuesday 23rd – Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2001

Inspection number: 224587

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Otley Street Skipton North Yorkshire
Postcode:	BD23 1ET
Telephone number:	01756 793075
Fax number:	01756 709502
Appropriate authority:	North Yorkshire Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Neville Price
Date of previous inspection:	28 <sup>th</sup> April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Otley Street Nursery School is an average sized nursery school providing education for 81 children aged between three and four years. They all attend part time. The school is oversubscribed and has a long waiting list. Four children are identified by the school as having special educational needs. A small number are learning English as an additional language. The school intake is very similar to that found during the last inspection. Around half the children come from the immediate area of the school with the remainder travelling from further afield including some outlying villages around Skipton. They live in a mixture of owner occupied and rented accommodation of different types. The school uses its own screening materials to check children's attainment on entry. Increasing numbers are arriving with some immaturity in their personal and social development but the overall attainment on entry is just above the average expected of children of this age.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school with a number of excellent features. Most children are on line to well exceed the expected standards by the time they leave. As a result of very good teaching, strong leadership and the valuable contributions made by all staff, children make good progress during their time in nursery. The school provides a very good basis for children's future learning. It does not have a delegated budget and, therefore, no judgement is made about value for money. The very many significant strengths of the school far outweigh those areas that could be improved.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards are high in all areas of learning
- Teaching is very good throughout the school
- It is very well led and managed by the headteacher and support body
- Provides an exceptionally positive learning environment for children which has a very powerful impact on their personal and social development

#### **What could be improved**

- Increasing staff confidence in using Information and Communications Technology
- Providing a written end of year report for parents on their children's progress

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in April 1997. All the issues raised during the last inspection have been successfully addressed and high standards have been maintained in the intervening years. The level of very good teaching is much higher and this has been helped by the improvements teachers have made in their planning of lessons. Staff now identify more clearly what children of different abilities are expected to learn. This means that higher attainers are given work that closely matches their abilities. The range and quality of resources outside are much improved and this, together with better teaching,

means children's skills in physical development are higher. Targets for future improvement are clearly understood by all staff and the school is well placed to make future improvements.

## STANDARDS

The majority enter with standards that are just above average when compared to children of a similar age. This is true for all areas of learning except in their personal and social development where increasing numbers are arriving with some delay. For example, many find it difficult early on to share and take turns. They make rapid progress during their time in school so that by the time they leave the majority are on line to well exceed the standard expected for children of a similar age. Standards are consistently high across all areas of learning which highlights the very good progress children make in their personal and social development This is because children are enthusiastic about all they do, staff know them well and encourage them to work hard. The small percentage of children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The even smaller number, learning English as an additional language, receive good teaching from all staff who ensure the full curriculum range is offered at a suitable level. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Personal development is very good and children collaborate readily in all their activities.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very good attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic, confident and show very good levels of concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is excellent both inside and outdoors. Children show a very clear understanding of the high expectations set by staff and work very well within the established moral framework.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships are central to the success enjoyed by the school. Children's response to any opportunities to extend their personal development is excellent.
Attendance	Attendance levels are very good for nursery age children.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	
Lessons seen overall	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.*

The quality of teaching is very good overall and better than when the school was last inspected. On that occasion a small proportion, three per cent of the teaching, was unsatisfactory and higher attainers were not always given hard enough work. These weaknesses have been remedied. Seventeen per cent of the teaching was excellent and forty four per cent was very good. None was judged to be unsatisfactory. This high quality teaching is seen across all areas of learning but teaching of language, literacy and mathematics is particularly effective. Teachers know the children well and they



demonstrate very good knowledge of the learning needs of nursery children. They have the confidence to take risks with their teaching, trying new approaches and activities, so that children remain interested and stimulated. A very good example of this was seen during a creative activity when the teacher working with a group trusted them to use expensive tone chimes as they played a nursery rhyme. The result was music making of a much higher standard than would normally be expected of children of this age. Story times are very well used to help children to develop a love of language and literature and an understanding of the structure of books. The teaching is so good because the planning is more detailed, work set and questions asked are demanding and relationships are excellent.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a very good range of interesting learning activities both indoors and out. The curriculum is very well planned and organised. Children access the full range of curriculum experiences. Visitors are used well to extend children's understanding of the wider world.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Only a small percentage of children are identified as having special educational needs. The school provides well organised support and this helps to ensure that children make consistently good progress. Individual education plans provide suitable targets for children to achieve.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Children learning English as an additional language are well supported.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is excellent overall, particularly for children's moral and social development. Staff provide a clear moral framework for the children to follow. They think about their actions and care for others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Provision for children's well being is very good. All staff are very conscientious in their duty of care. Staff know the children's needs very well; parents appreciate the care offered by staff.

The nursery welcomes parents and carers at all times. Links with families are very good and this has a very beneficial effect on children's learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of the leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher leads by example and has a clear vision for its future development. The leadership is very effective in monitoring the quality of children's learning and there is a commitment amongst all staff to achieving high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school has no governing body. A support body, which includes representatives of the Local Education Authority, oversees the work of the nursery. It is very effective. Individual members visit regularly and they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good systems are in place which ensure that the school regularly reviews its own performance. Children's progress is carefully checked and a wide range of data is collected. This is well used to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching and measure how much children are learning. Information collected by the school is also used to check how well the whole year group has performed and identify any weaknesses. This enables valuable year by year comparisons to be made.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of all the available resources. Space is used imaginatively to create an exciting learning environment. Very good levels of financial detail are included in the school development plan and systems are established to ensure that money is spent wisely

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards are high and the teaching is very good</li> <li>Each child is treated as an individual and becomes confident</li> <li>Children make very good progress</li> <li>Staff are approachable and friendly. They listen to parents and make learning fun</li> <li>Children feel safe, secure and are confident enough to make mistakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A small number felt they are not kept well enough informed about their children's progress</li> </ul>

Inspection findings agree with the parents' overwhelmingly positive views. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school and this allows a very good dialogue to exist between school and home. Inspection findings confirm that regular opportunities are available for parents to receive verbal information about their children's progress, including access to very detailed records. However, no written end of year reports are produced at the moment and the school has agreed that this area could be improved.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Standards are high in all areas of learning**

1. Children arrive in nursery with attainment levels which are just above average. By the time they leave they are likely to achieve standards which are well above those expected for children of their age. Most are on line to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of their first year in primary school. Children make good rates of progress during their time at Otley Street and there is a good level of consistency in the standards they reach across all the curriculum areas. The standards are better than when the school was last inspected and the quality of the school's work has been recognised by the Local Education Authority. It has nominated the nursery for an Excellence Award under the Schools Achievement Awards Scheme because of the good progress made by all children based on detailed assessments. For example, during 1999 – 2000 over ninety per cent of children made at least 12 months progress in all the curriculum areas when compared to their standards as they arrived in nursery. A similar picture was found during the period of the inspection

2. Standards are high because the curriculum is carefully planned to make it interesting and enjoyable, teaching is very good and the children are keen to succeed.

3. Improving communication and language skills is given a high priority by all the staff. Children are given very good opportunities to practise their writing through a range of opportunities. A very good example of this is the way in which children were writing invitations to the "Teddy Bears' Picnic" that was planned for later in the week. They understood many of the conventions associated with sending invitations and made them personal by addressing them to their own teddy. Many were able to write their words clearly and they took a great deal of time and care to ensure that their finished "product" was the best they could achieve. Others needed some support by adults working with them but all were able to complete the task set.

4. Books feature prominently in the life and work of the school which provides an attractive literary environment in which children can learn. Most are able to recognise their own names and other words that they see around them. For example, they were able to read some of the words on the invitation, using the initial letter sounds as a clue. A smaller group could read the address, "Mummy Bear Cottage in the Wood" that was written on a parcel by their teacher. The majority are able to talk confidently about books they have enjoyed and what made them special. They use an increasingly mature range of words and incorporate into their imaginative play many of the stories they know, often playing constructively for long periods. One group recreated a Bear's Cave and they organised themselves very well. Conversation such as "the baby gets very hungry during the night so I'm preparing the porridge for him now" was common place and demonstrates the high standards children are reaching in this area.

5. Children achieve well in mathematics and are able to apply their knowledge in many of the curriculum areas. This is because they are given tasks which staff plan carefully to meet their individual needs. This was not always the case during the last inspection when work for higher attainers was not demanding enough. Staff now use registration time very well as an opportunity to practise children's counting and adding skills. Most are able to count up to twenty, with some counting much higher than this. Higher attainers are able to work out how many children are present and can

recognise the figures that represent this amount. Children enjoy their lessons, tasks are demanding and they are expected to work at a fast pace. This helps them to make quicker progress in their learning. A good example of this was seen when a group, working with an adult, were asked to predict how heavy two boxes would be. When they lifted the smaller box they found that it was, in fact, heavier than the larger one. Most were able to talk about this and some of the group were able to describe other examples of lighter and heavier objects they had found around the nursery.

6. Children show impressive ability to plan and carry out simple experiments, demonstrating high levels of independence that are far higher than would normally be found with children of this age. They can recognise similarities and differences and ask questions about what might be happening next. These skills were seen particularly during construction activities when groups were building towers using plastic blocks. Many were able to take on an “investigative” approach, planning their models, selecting larger blocks to ensure a firm foundation and answering questions such as “what would happen if we added three large blocks on top of this tower? Children collaborate very well during these sessions, supporting their friends and taking turns. These high levels of independence and sensible attitudes to work are important in achieving high standards in all curriculum areas. Children are set challenging targets and, supported and guided by the adults, they are always seeking to improve.

**The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school.**

7. The quality of the teaching shows an improvement from when the school was last inspected. On this occasion, sixty per cent of the teaching observed was very good or excellent and none was judged to be unsatisfactory. This quality was seen in all curriculum areas.

8. Staff are very experienced and they understand the needs of young children well. They plan their work carefully and are clear about what they want the children to learn. As a result, they are able to provide a good range of stimulating activities that captures children’s enthusiasm and makes them keen to learn. Activities are practically based and the weakness identified at the time of the last inspection in setting challenging enough work for higher attainers has been tackled successfully. In all the activities, staff carefully assess what each child should achieve and ask questions that make them think. None of the children now find their work too easy.

9. Lessons move at a brisk pace and this helps the children to learn quickly. Every opportunity is taken to provide learning experiences that are purposeful. An example of this is the way in which registration time is used successfully to improve children’s knowledge of number and to practise their counting skills. They were expected to count up to twenty with the teacher and then were asked to work out how many of their group members were absent and what this meant to the number of drinks that would be needed at snack time. The adult skilfully involved all group members in the activity, making sure that no one was left out. Questions were asked which encouraged children to express themselves accurately and confidently. Occasions such as these contribute significantly to the high standards achieved and good progress made by the children.

10. Staff are also confident enough to take risks with their teaching, trying something new which they expect children will find interesting and exciting as well as challenging. For example, during a group activity at the end of a session the teacher talked to the children about tone chimes and explained how they worked and how careful they would need to be if they were allowed to use them. The children responded magnificently and demonstrated exceptional levels of maturity and common sense as they took turns making sounds and describing what they could hear. The activity ended with a performance of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” conducted by the teacher. The quality of their work and their ability to keep time was far higher than one would normally expect to find with children of this age. When

lessons proceed in this way children's learning is more effective and they make better progress because the work is so closely matched to their individual needs and requirements.

11. Another very positive feature of the best teaching is the high expectations that staff have for children to achieve and behave well. In one lesson, the teacher was working with a group at story time. Her descriptions and use of language held the group's attention, she created a sense of anticipation which all the children enjoyed and encouraged them to predict which way the story would end. For example, "I think the bear will be frightened because of the dark", said one of the group members. The skills of the teacher made sure that everyone took part, their listening skills improved and their understandable excitement did not get in the way of their learning.

12. Children's activities remain purposeful because the adults working with them carefully check what they are doing. Staff keep detailed records, meet regularly and make notes of progress that is made. All this information is shared with colleagues. This allows them to plan future work more accurately, adjusting the levels of difficulty where necessary so that each child's needs are met. Children with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are very well taught. Lessons are carefully planned to suit their individual needs and staff employed to work with them are very effective because they build on the work already introduced. A good example of this was seen during a matching game played by a group of children who had a wide range of abilities. The adult working patiently with them made sure that a child who found difficulty in recognising the matching shapes was not disadvantaged. She was able to take a full and active part in the game, enjoyed the opportunity to play with others and made a good rate of progress. By the end of the game, the child was able to initiate a similar game by herself.

### **The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and support body**

13. There is no Governing Body but a support body has been set up which comprises members of the local community as well as representatives of the Local Education Authority. The headteacher, staff and support body work effectively to make sure that the school's agreed aims are reflected in its daily life. The positive approach and caring community that has been created makes a significant contribution to the high standards that are achieved.

14. The school is always seeking to improve by analysing its performance. A good example of this is the use of information gathered when children arrive. Staff plan activities based on a thorough understanding of children's levels of attainment and then track the progress made in each curriculum area. The data is drawn together to provide a whole school overview which indicates how successful staff have been in meeting the targets that they have set themselves. Children benefit from this rigorous approach to school improvement because the curriculum can be more accurately organised to meet the needs of certain groups. A good example of this was seen during this school year when it became apparent that more children were arriving in school with delays in their personal and social development. Staff organised activities which helped children to improve these skills, for example encouraging them to become independent by tidying away, learning to share and taking turns. A feature of this school improvement model is the supportive way in which Local Education Authority officers monitor the work at Otley Street. During regular visits, useful evaluations are produced which measure how successful the school has been in its own review and offering guidance on how to improve things even more.

15. Improvements have been made to the development plan since the last inspection which makes it a much more useful document now that it covers a longer timescale. All staff and members of the support body make a contribution and know that their views and opinions will be valued and listened to. A good example of this is the way in which plans were drawn up to improve the outside area.

Provision here was criticised during the last inspection. Everyone was invited to contribute, the responses were debated and action plans carefully drawn up. The excellent development of the outdoor play area illustrates how the outcome of this process has been very positive. The headteacher has been very successful in attracting a range of community support to complete parts of the project.

16. Despite having no statutory responsibility, the support body of the school plays a full and active part in its life. They visit regularly and are very supportive of the staff and children and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They achieve this by meeting regularly, organising visits to school in a structured way and developing a good working relationship with the Local Education Authority. A good example of this was seen when the chair of governors visited the school to help with a health and safety audit. Similarly, the group regularly checks financial accounts that are presented to them.

17. The high standards of leadership and financial administration found during the last inspection have been maintained and built on. Success in these areas contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school because there is a clear direction, resources are used efficiently and self review is seen as an important part of the school's ethos.

**The school provides an exceptionally positive learning environment for children which has a very powerful impact on their personal and social development**

18. Children behave extremely well for their age and respond with maturity when asked a question or to help with an activity. Staff are very clear about what standards of personal and social development they are trying to achieve with each child. They set realistic but consistently high expectations for children's behaviour and, although some of the most recent intake have been immature on arrival, the strategies staff employ are very successful. A good example of children knowing how to behave was seen during the very popular Rhyme Time at which parents, staff and children come together to sing and act out popular nursery rhymes. Although children were delighted to welcome their parents into the classroom, they were not distracted by their presence. Children participated wholeheartedly in the singing and followed their teacher's instructions very well. This eagerness to engage fully in an activity is typical of every session and ensures that children are constantly reinforcing the very positive behavioural code whilst encountering new experiences each day.

19. The exceptionally strong relationships established between the headteacher, staff and children make this a most welcoming and unthreatening first learning environment for young children. All adults adopt an extremely effective approach when working with the children. They clearly feel great affection for the children in their care and spend much time sharing personal experiences and encouraging children to talk about what they have been doing since they last saw them. Children are very familiar with this easy adult-child interaction and are equally happy to chat with visitors to the school about their pets or their birthday presents.

20. The school aims to improve the self-esteem and confidence of each child. Storytimes provide excellent opportunities for children to show initiative and make very perceptive contributions about the world around them. When reading the story "Can't You Sleep Little Bear?", children decided that their classroom would not be as dark as Little Bear's cave without the lights on because it was bedtime in the story but morning in school. The teacher let them check by turning out the lights.

21. Adults act as extremely positive role models for the children and provide an excellent moral and social framework for them to copy. Children are consistently encouraged to show kindness and respect to others and are quickly shown how to approach a problem in a positive manner. Children with special educational needs also benefit from this strategy and accept the same framework of expectations set by staff. For example, one child was carefully reminded how to share the play dough

when working with other children rather than just grabbing some more. Basic courtesies of “please” and “thank you” and addressing children and staff by name are patiently reinforced in a quietly consistent manner.

22. Children flourish in the enticingly warm and secure learning environment which the Headteacher and staff create. They really look forward to coming to Otley Street Nursery School and during their time in the school become socially adept and ready to meet the challenges of full-time education.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Increasing staff confidence in using Information and Communications Technology.**

23. The school has worked very hard since the last inspection to improve the quality of the provision and raise standards in Information and Communications Technology (ICT). By the time they leave nursery, the majority of children are on line to exceed the standards expected in the Early Learning Goals which are the targets set for children in nursery and reception classes. Many are arriving in school with good skill levels, for example, controlling the mouse with great dexterity and switching between programs unaided. Children show high levels of confidence and can talk about how computers can be used in different situations. A good range of interesting software is made available to the children who use it well.

24. Some staff have good skills in ICT and are confident when teaching the subject. Others are less confident and this is recognised within the school plan where improving staff knowledge is given a high priority. The lack of confidence becomes apparent when “things go wrong” with the computer or when children’s own skills are particularly well developed. The plan identifies a sensible timescale for staff to access this training and the cost implications are clearly identified. All staff are committed to making the necessary improvements so that they can continue to offer children sufficient levels of challenge.

25. With the continued emphasis on staff training and improving children’s skills, the school is well placed to continue the progress that has been made to date.

### **Providing a written end of year report for parents on their children's progress**

26. The school makes great efforts to ensure parents receive regular verbal updates on their children’s progress and they also have the opportunity to attend a formal parents’ meeting during the year. Staff compile very detailed assessment information and individual records on the progress each child makes while at the school. However, some parents comment that they do not receive a written report at the end of the year, detailing what their children can do. Inspection findings confirm their views. The production of an end of year summary of children’s progress will help to ensure that all parents are fully informed of the progress their child makes should they be unable to attend the school’s meetings or to speak informally to teachers on a regular basis.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

- (1) Improve staff confidence in using Information and Communications Technology by delivering the action plan already agreed with staff and the Support Body.  
(*paragraphs 24, 25*)



- (2) Improve the quality of the written information sent to parents by producing a written report at the end of the school year.  
*(paragraph 26)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
17	44	28	11	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	41
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	NA

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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

### *Attendance*

**Authorised absence**

%
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**Unauthorised absence**

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff**

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	108

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	124432
Total expenditure	122324
Expenditure per pupil	2781
Balance brought forward from previous year	NA
Balance carried forward to next year	2108

The school does not have a delegated budget

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	81
Number of questionnaires returned	52

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	90	10			
My child is making good progress in school.	73	25			
Behaviour in the school is good.	71	27			2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	10	10	2	2	8
The teaching is good.	79	19			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	30	4	4	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	92	8			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	21			
The school works closely with parents.	75	21	4		
The school is well led and managed.	96	2			2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	17			4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	10	2		8

**Not all categories received a response so some rows do not total 100**

### **Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

Very good support for children who achieve high standards  
 All staff are approachable, they listen to parents and make learning fun  
 Each child is treated as an individual and becomes confident.  
 Parents are made to feel very welcome.  
 Children feel safe and secure to make mistakes

