

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TUNSTALL NURSERY SCHOOL**

Croydon, Surrey

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101705

Headteacher: Penny Nicholls

Reporting inspector: Stephen Beaumont  
8440

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Inspection number: 230242

Short 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 to 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Tunstall Road Croydon
Postcode:	CRO 6TY
Telephone number:	(020) 8654 0371
Fax number:	(020) 8654 0371
Appropriate authority:	Croydon Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor Mary Walker OBE
Date of previous inspection:	21 <sup>st</sup> to 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

There are 96 children who attend the two nursery classes either in the morning or in the afternoon, with five staying for the whole day. There are 17 children with special educational needs, including two who have statements. The school serves an area with mixed housing and welcomes families from varied cultural backgrounds. There are 22 children with English as an additional language, which is a higher percentage than in schools nationally. Ten of these children are at an early stage of learning English. Children enter these nursery classes in the September following their third birthday with skills broadly in line with children of this age nationally. They leave the school, after a year of nursery education, to go to reception classes in local primary schools.

There is also a "Family Room" which provides opportunities for parents and carers to come with their children [from birth to three] for play sessions. Here they experience and enjoy activities with practitioners and learn together about aspects of parenthood. Some 600 children used this facility last year; parents are delighted with what is provided and value greatly the extended family that this creates for them. Although this is referred to in the report, all judgements are made on the quality of teaching and learning in the nursery classes.

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

This is a very good school with some excellent features. Children make very good progress in all areas of learning and when they leave they are well on their way to achieving the nationally expected early learning goals when they complete their reception year. Children make particularly good progress in gaining social skills and developing emotionally. The quality of teaching is very good and this has a very positive effect, not only on what children learn, but also how they learn. Children become independent and confident learners. They enjoy their activities, work and play with a smile, and are eager to come to school. Governors and staff give very good leadership and parents are fully involved in the life of the school, and in educating their own children. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Ensures that all children make very good progress in each of the required areas of learning and excellent progress in growing socially and emotionally.
- Provides teaching of a very high quality. Teaching is almost always very good, and sometimes excellent, which is the main reason for such good progress and the very high quality of learning. Teachers and other adults work very well together as a team.
- Develops excellent attitudes in children. They enjoy their learning and delight in their own successes.
- Creates a very positive and extremely effective partnership with parents. This starts from the belief that parents are the first and main educators and is built on so that they are fully involved in their children's learning.

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

- The area to the front of the school so as to make better use of space, extend facilities for the sharing library and improve the aesthetic appearance of the school. The use made of all available space within the present building.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory progress in bringing about suggested improvements. There were no key issues for action from the last inspection, which was carried out in April 1998. It was suggested that the school should extend the staff appraisal system and give further attention to monitoring its own work and success. There has been an improvement in these areas, but the school recognises that further work needs to be done. The headteacher is considering working with staff and governors in preparing for an 'Investors in People' Charter Mark. This will also assist the school in becoming better at analysing its own strengths and areas for improvement. Parents see the opening of the 'Family Room', the increase in

learning resources and even fuller communication with the school as notable recent improvements. The school is well placed to continue improving.

## **STANDARDS**

Most children enter the school in the September following their third birthday with skills and knowledge broadly in line with that of other children of this age nationally. When they transfer to reception classes in other primary schools a year later, they are on course to reach the early learning goals and, in many cases, to exceed them.

Children gain excellent social skills and their emotional growth is also excellent. They become independent learners and are confident in working in different social groups. They relate very well to their teachers and other adults and work alongside other children very well. Children can join an activity effectively, they learn how to take turns and recognise that there are times to talk and times to listen. The very calm atmosphere assists their emotional growth. Children feel very safe and realise that they will not only be supported in their activities, but that they will not be made to do anything they feel unhappy about. They feel valued as themselves and this gives them good self-esteem.

Standards of communicating are good overall, although several children have speech problems. Almost all children speak in phrases and most use questions. Many can start conversations with children and adults. Higher attaining children can not only offer their own opinions, but also use tenses and grammar correctly. An example of this was where a child was sharing a book with an adult and said, "Let's turn over shall we?" Children who had become fire fighters in the garden used speech very effectively in planning their strategy to get to and put out a fire in Hampshire. Children listen well, especially during story times. All children make marks on paper and higher attainers can write their own names and write recognisable letters. They handle books well and know that writing and printing mean something. Children have well developed physical skills for their age and they have good co-ordination, which helps them make things and manipulate materials. Most children can count objects accurately to three, many to five and some to ten. They can find one more and one less. They are given very rich experiences of their immediate surroundings, which means that their knowledge of the world around them is very good. All children can select and name colours and use paint and other materials creatively. They listen to music and play instruments with interest.

Children of all abilities make very good progress. Higher attaining children are being challenged and all practitioners have high expectations of what children can do. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are carefully and skilfully supported and make very good progress. Practitioners are careful to include all children in activities, whatever their ability or cultural background, and this has a positive effect on gaining high standards.

## **CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Children have excellent attitudes. They are eager to come to school, quickly hang up their coats and get straight down to an activity. Parents state that they find it difficult to explain that they cannot go to school on a Saturday. Children are very involved in their learning and enjoy their activities.
Behaviour	Behaviour is very good. Ordered routines and secure surroundings help produce a calm environment. In this, children are treated consistently and they learn how to behave in varied situations.
Personal development and relationships	These are excellent and a strength of the school. Children are recognised as unique individuals and are treated with respect. They are seen as being at the centre of their own education and practitioners carefully find out what stages of learning children are at and build on these in small steps. Relationships between children and adults in the school are excellent and they have very good relationships with other children.
Attendance	No figures are available, but attendance during the inspection period was low at about 80 per cent.

There are notable strengths in children's attitudes and in relationships within the school and this has a very positive effect on their social and emotional development.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	
Quality of teaching	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.*

In almost all sessions inspected, teaching was judged to be very good. In some sessions, teaching was excellent. No teaching was judged to be less than good. Teaching is very good in all areas of learning. Teachers have an excellent understanding of how children learn; they also know their own children very well. All staff are very experienced and well qualified. Practitioners plan activities very well together, evaluate how successful they have been and how they can be improved. Teaching starts from where children are, carefully builds on children's experiences and skilfully extends their understanding in small steps. In this, it ensures that the needs of all children are met. Practitioners give children time to think, experiment, try again and respond. They provide a very carefully constructed series of activities and work alongside children in extending their understanding. There is a very good mix of individually chosen and group activities with adult intervention and extension. Practitioners calmly, yet persuasively, guide children to make sure they all get a balanced curriculum. The very high quality of teaching is the main reason for the very good progress that children make.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities is very good. Practitioners plan activities to cover all required areas of learning and make sure that all children select from a wide range of experiences. The sharing library extends learning opportunities to the home, and the school organises holiday clubs for 4 to 8 year-olds, which are very well supported.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Provision is very good; children's needs are carefully analysed and sensitive support is given. Specialists, who come into the school, such as speech therapists, meet with all practitioners to allow an exchange of views. This helps children make very good progress and meet the targets that are set for them.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Practitioners who speak several languages work alongside individuals and with small groups to give added confidence to children who are at the early stage of learning English. This has a very positive effect on progress.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision. A wide range of visits and visitors, including string quartets, brass ensembles and dancers are of good quality and extend cultural experiences. Many families and members of varied faith communities share their customs, food and festivals with children. Children are part of a very vibrant multi-cultural community within the school. They are given very good opportunities to be quiet and think and inspectors noted several instances of children expressing wonder during their activities. A child expressed real joy when she first felt paint on her hand and again when she printed it on paper. Children stood open mouthed when they broke the pods of peas and looked inside. Children grow morally and socially through the very good opportunities they are given and enhanced by the whole atmosphere of the school.
How well the school cares	This is a very caring school in which children feel safe. Procedures for



for its children	dealing with accidents are good and there is very good liaison with parents when children are ill.
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The expert construction of learning activities, the very good opportunities for personal development, and the positive partnership with parents have a very positive effect on standards and progress.

### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is new to the school and is bringing her own ideas, building on what has been created. The deputy headteacher is an expert in how young children learn and is involved with several national and international research projects. She visits many early years' settings and brings back new ideas and ways of working for the benefit of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a clear vision for the development of the school. They attract record numbers to the Annual General Meeting, which is organised as a family picnic in the nursery garden. They carry out their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Assessment of children's progress and development is good and this is also monitored with the teachers of the reception class which most children transfer to. The school is not evaluating its own strengths and weaknesses sufficiently and practitioners are not given enough time to do this.
The strategic use of resources	Most of the financial management is now undertaken by the school and it is carried out efficiently. All available grants are gained and generally spent within the year. Adults are very well deployed, but teachers and nursery nurses do not have enough non-contact time to allow joint planning and evaluation. Story areas are not sufficiently used throughout the day and there is under use of the area in front of the school, which is also aesthetically depressing.

Governors and staff work very well together to give positive leadership and effective management. This helps to maintain a calm atmosphere and ensures a smoothly running school.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like the school.</li> <li>• They make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Children become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	No significant areas were identified through the questionnaire, or at the parents' meeting. The only request was that a primary school be built next to it, so that children could continue their education.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents and found evidence for their approval during the inspection.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Ensures that all children make very good progress in each of the required areas of learning, and excellent progress in growing socially and emotionally.**

1. Each child has a home visit from their 'key worker' before they start at the nursery. The family and the key worker start a record of achievement for the child. Parents' and key workers' records of children's skills and knowledge when they start in the September following their third birthday show that children's skills and knowledge are broadly in line with what is expected of children of this age nationally. These records of achievement are kept up during the nursery year. They show that children make very good progress. Practitioners' records of individual children confirm this view. The school keeps excellent portfolios of photographic and other evidence for each area of learning. These show a very wide series of experiences and again confirm that children make very good progress. When children leave the school, they are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals and, in many cases, they are likely to exceed them.
2. Children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children quickly make excellent relationships with practitioners and with other children. They are given good opportunities to work on their own and in small and large groups. Children soon become adept at 'talking themselves into' another group to join them. A good example of this was a boy who wanted to join three others playing with farmyard animals. He first observed, then sat down with them stating, 'This horse can jump the fence'. The others then joined him in demonstrating that they could make their horses do this. In their activities children celebrate their success, but also know that they can make mistakes, and this helps their personal development. Group time, with their key worker at the end of sessions, is used very well to provide quiet times to listen to music and a time to listen to stories and share their experiences with each other. Children know others in these small groups well and learn to react to them in a supportive way. Children learn about the differences of others and accept that not everyone is the same.
3. Standards of communicating are good overall, although several children have speech problems. All practitioners give very good examples of speech, and are careful to insist on correct vocabulary and to extend the amount of words that children use. Practitioners use their voices very well, notably in the telling of stories, where they make children interested through use of speaking softly or loudly and by building up excitement and wonder. Almost all children speak in phrases and most use these in an extended way. Higher attaining children can not only offer their own opinions, but also use tenses and grammar correctly. Children listen well, especially during story times. All children make marks on paper and higher attainers can write their own names and write recognisable letters. Very large pieces of paper and thick markers are placed alongside some activities. This encourages children, especially boys, to make marks and record what has been done. There is a system which allows children to send messages, or art work to their friends, parents or practitioners. Children use this well and are delighted when they go to their own jar, recognise their name and see something in it. They handle books well and know that writing and printing mean something. They look at books, which they have chosen in the story sessions, and enjoy responding to the pictures.
4. Children have well developed physical skills for their age and they have good co-ordination, which helps them make things and manipulate materials. They are adept at manoeuvring trikes and use the road system in the garden skilfully. Children can catch a large ball if thrown accurately to them, but most cannot throw it back. They balance very well and climb and use space effectively. Children gain confidence in using fixed apparatus and a health worker was seen noting the excellent progress of a child with difficulties in movement.
5. Most children can count objects accurately to three, many to five and some to ten. They can find one more and one less. A good example of this was noted in the 'snail game' in which children had to match colours and move snails on 'just one'. They were able to suggest who could win, and all knew that snails could only move one square. They were also able to explain to the inspectors how

the game was played. Children are able to recognise shapes and to see patterns. They know a selection of number rhymes and enjoy playing a game, bedecked with fire helmets, in which five firemen jump from the wall, until there are none.

6. Children are given very rich experiences of their immediate surroundings, which means that their knowledge of the world around them is very good. Children used magnifying glasses and mirrors to explore what they were seeing and, through role play and imaginative activities, entered the world of fire-fighters and drew maps. A very exciting series of visits to such places as the garage, Chinese restaurant and a farm make learning real and increase understanding. The school guinea pig is well cared for and known by all. Growing things are all around and children have watched their sunflowers come to bloom and helped tend the garden.
7. All children can select and name colours and use paint and other materials creatively. They listen to music and play instruments with interest. There are excellent displays of the art of Rothko and Kandinsky, with the children's art in the same style alongside them. These show that children have looked closely and used their own ideas. They use tools well and make models from waste materials and Divali lamps from clay very effectively.
8. Children of all abilities make very good progress. Higher attaining children are being challenged and all practitioners have high expectations of what children can do. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are carefully and skilfully supported and they make very good progress. Practitioners are careful to include all children in activities, whatever their ability or cultural background, and this has a positive effect on gaining high standards.

**Provides teaching of a very high quality. Teaching is almost always very good, and sometimes excellent, which is the main reason for such good progress and the very high quality of learning. Teachers and other adults work very well together as a team.**

9. Of the 22 lessons inspected, 15 were judged to be very good, two were excellent and the remaining five were good. This consistently very good teaching is the main reason for the very good progress that children make. All practitioners are experienced, specifically trained for this age group and understand how young children learn. They know that children learn through experience and play, and in small steps. Practitioners plan activities to start from where children are and work alongside them to extend their understanding and develop their skills. They calmly, but persuasively, move them on from one activity to another so that they experience all the areas of learning. Practitioners recognise that children learn at their own pace, which may vary greatly, and that activities will need to be repeated to reinforce learning. There is a very good mixture of independent learning and working in small groups with very skilled adult intervention.
10. Planning is very thorough and is done by practitioners as a team. In their meetings, at the end of each session, they evaluate how effective activities have been and how they could be improved. Similarly key workers carefully focus on particular children, check where they are in their learning, record significant facts and prepare the next steps. In this, each child has an individual education plan and this is a very positive factor in ensuring that children of all abilities make progress. Practitioners plan activities that are exciting, stimulating and lead to further learning. An example of this was in a language session where individuals were taken through a book made using the digital camera with the common repeated statement. "I can see.... And he is looking at me". On each page was a picture of the child, or another from the group with the same key worker. Children delighted in seeing themselves [sometimes in the home situation], and recognising their friends. They picked up the pattern of words and were able to read the book for themselves. This activity was followed up in the story session with a commercially produced book. Practitioners also make stories come alive by using props to go along with the stories. Hence, not only do children listen to the words of a story such as 'Goldilocks', but they see pictures, and move the three bears into model beds.
11. Practitioners give children time to think, experiment, try again and respond. Children are not rushed to an end product. Teachers and others recognise that it is how children learn that is of vital importance. This has a very positive effect on the quality of learning.

**Develops excellent attitudes in children. They enjoy their learning and delight in their own successes.**

12. Children really enjoy coming to school. They arrive at the start of the session, some respond to the greeting given to them, but all quickly remove their coats, hang them up and go straight to an activity. Almost all are absorbed in their play and concentrate for sustained periods. When they have satisfied themselves, they move naturally to another group, or to enjoy what has been set up outdoors. They learn with a smile and high concentration is seen through their tongue movements, as for instance when they were threading objects to make bracelets. They return to activities to try other things, or to express themselves in different ways.
13. Children learn to be independent, they collect what they need and understand that they must wear suitable clothing and clear up after themselves. Hence, when they were working with an adult in making vegetable curry, they put on aprons, and made sure that what they had used was put back into its right place. They found it very difficult to scrape and slice carrots, but on the adult's further teaching of how to hold the knife and where to press down, they persevered. When they found that they could do it, they were noticeably excited. It would have been the easiest thing for the adult to do the cutting, but her skill in explaining and showing meant that the children learned for themselves.
14. Attitudes at the end of sessions are also excellent. Practitioners make sure that children finish with a quiet time in which they listen to music and respond to a story. Children become totally absorbed in the story and are often surprised when their parent or carer comes to collect them. They return home tired, having worked hard.

**Creates a very positive and extremely effective partnership with parents. This starts from the belief that parents are the first and main educators and is built on so that they are fully involved in their children's learning.**

15. From the moment a family expresses an interest in the school, they are welcomed into its activities and given every assistance in preparing their children for the nursery. Many parents have already used the Family Room, worked alongside others and seen the nursery activities that are ongoing. All parents are visited by the child's key worker in their homes and the partnership is explained. Parents are reminded that they are the prime educators and that the nursery is there to help them in this task.
16. The school provides an excellent sharing library for families. Parents borrow books, with props to make stories come alive, jigsaw puzzles and other educational games to play with their children at home. This is very well used. During the inspection, a mother explained how useful this was, as she was unsure what was appropriate for her child of three, and found what could be borrowed, together with suggestions on how to use them, of immense value. Practitioners also explain very carefully how learning is organised in the nursery, what is being taught and how parents can help their own children at home.
17. The Family Room provides practical help and more formal courses in health care and parenthood, which parents and carers value. They attend sessions as required and offer help to others, alongside that given by the practitioners. There is an excellent system for settling children into the nursery classes. Parents are fully involved in this.
18. The school communicates with parents very well through a newsletter, daily notes on the blackboard and well placed notices. Practitioners are always available and parents consult them naturally at the start and end of sessions. Open evenings are also held, where parents have good opportunities to discuss their child's progress.
19. Parents work alongside others in working directly with groups of children. A parent, who comes in regularly for one session a week, was providing very good support and stimulus to a group. She explained how she found this useful to herself, in seeing how children's thinking could be extended. Parents also help with swimming, not only going with their own child, but offering to go with another

if no parent or carer is available for them. It was excellent to see fathers and grandfathers also involved in the school.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The area to the front of the school so as to make better use of space, extend facilities for the sharing library and improve the aesthetic appearance of the school. The use made of all available space within the present building.**

20. Although the school has very good resources, including an excellent nursery garden, with a wide range of carefully arranged learning activities, practitioners do not make full use of the room that is available to them throughout the day. Story bases are underused, other than at the end of sessions. Cooking was done in an open area, when a more secluded area would have been more suitable. The sharing library is an excellent facility, but it is very cramped, and parents and children find it difficult to see what is available.
21. There is ample room on the school site, but the area between the road and the main building is poorly used. A very large brick built garage in this area takes up much space and is only used for storing materials. Two huge dustbins dominate the entrance to the car park and this makes the aesthetic appearance of the garage and entrance even worse.

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

22. In order to improve facilities and standards further governors, staff and parents should;
  - a) Ensure that all available room within the existing building is used effectively throughout each session.
  - b) Explore ways in which the area to the front of the school could be tidied up, and improved. This will facilitate fuller use by visitors such as speech therapists, rationalise office space, provide more room for the sharing library, and enable better car parking.  
(Paragraphs 20 and 21)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of sessions observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	7

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	15	5	0	0	0	0
Percentage	9	69	22	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of sessions observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each session represents more than four percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	48
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	17

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	22

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### Attendance

Authorised absence

%
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Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	Not available
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School data	Not available
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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)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.4

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	224

Number of pupils per FTE adult	3.7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	336253
Total expenditure	313412
Expenditure per pupil	6669
Balance brought forward from previous year	43360
Balance carried forward to next year	66201

### Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	96
Number of questionnaires returned	43

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	35	0	0	14
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	28	0	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	26	2	0	7
The teaching is good.	67	23	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	30	5	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	26	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	37	26	2	0	16
The school works closely with parents.	67	21	0	0	9
The school is well led and managed.	70	28	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	21	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	23	0	0	9

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents saw the 'Family Room', which they could use with their children from birth to three, as extremely valuable. They thought that teachers and assistants working in it provided an excellent learning environment, which prepared their children very well for the nursery classes.