

INSPECTION REPORT

CIPPENHAM NURSERY SCHOOL

Slough

LEA area: Slough

Unique reference number: 109762

Headteacher: Ms J Pocock

Reporting inspector: Ms S Billington
4343

Dates of inspection: 16th – 17th October 2001

Inspection number: 230875

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Andrews Way Cippenham Slough
Postcode:	SL1 5NL
Telephone number:	01628 661506
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Arthur
Date of previous inspection:	26 th January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a large nursery school with 160 children on roll. The local authority has recently changed admission arrangements to primary schools so that this year younger children are being admitted to the nursery; they are now starting from the age of three. At the time of the inspection, about two thirds of the children had only been in nursery school for a few weeks and in some cases just a few days. These children will spend two to three terms in the nursery, attending on a part-time basis before moving on to infant schools. The nursery serves a wide area and children come from a broad range of backgrounds. Their attainment on entry is broadly average.

The majority of children are of white UK heritage; approximately 25 per cent are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Fifteen per cent speak English as an additional language. The main community languages other than English are Urdu and Panjabi.

The proportion of children identified as having special educational needs is below average at around eleven per cent. These children generally have speech and language difficulties, moderate learning difficulties or physical disabilities.

The school has a high level of involvement with local providers of child care and education. Teachers and nursery nurses provide support and training for childminders and staff running pre-school groups and nurseries.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. Good teaching ensures that children achieve well. There is very good provision for children's personal development. Leadership and management are very good.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good and at times very good, ensuring that children make good progress
- Provision for children's personal development is very good, ensuring that they develop positive attitudes to learning
- Partnership with parents is strong and they are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning
- The curriculum is broad and made exciting and interesting for the children
- The head and staff constantly seek improvements to the quality of teaching and learning

What could be improved

- Systems for tracking the progress of children with special educational needs

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 January 1998. The strengths identified at that time have been maintained and there are been some further improvements. Children make good progress and achieve well, particularly in their personal and social skills. They are well prepared for the move to reception classes in primary schools. The quality of teaching is good, as it was found to be in the last inspection. Very effective leadership has successfully brought about improvements to the learning environment, particularly to the outside area and community facilities; these are well used. The one area of weakness identified in the last inspection was provision for music; there has been good improvement in this aspect and children are given good opportunities to listen to a wide range of music and to make music in small groups.

STANDARDS

Children achieve well overall, ensuring that they have a good base for learning when they move to infant schools. A high level of attention is paid to promoting children's personal and social development and their progress in this area is very good. They also achieve well in aspects of creative development, particularly in drawing and painting. Very good provision for physical development ensures that children develop confidence and a good level of skills in all aspects of learning in this area. Speaking and listening skills develop well and the majority of children quickly learn to follow instructions, answer and ask questions and to explain their ideas and observations. Children have a secure understanding in the early stages of literacy and numeracy.

Children with special needs make good progress and achieve well.

Those children who speak English as an additional language quickly acquire a good level of competence in understanding and communicating in English. Children who are fluent in their home languages, whatever these are, are well on course to achieve the early learning goals¹.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children are enthusiastic about the range of activities on offer. Many work with a good level of concentration and a high level of interest.
Behaviour	Very good. Even the youngest children quickly learn to respond to the staff's consistent expectations.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children learn to take responsibility for organising activities and handle books and equipment with care. They begin to appreciate the needs of others and to work together in pairs and small groups.
Attendance	Good. Children are keen to come to school and arrive promptly for the start of each session.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children:	Aged 3-4 years
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Teaching is good and in some areas of learning it is very good. Teachers and nursery nurses make good use of resources to engage children's interest and explain and demonstrate how they can take a further step in their learning. Staff make very effective use of talk, asking questions and introducing new vocabulary to encourage children to observe carefully or to use what they know in new learning. Children are encouraged to work together and to use their initiative and imagination, for example in organising role play.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally good; there is a particularly strong emphasis on creating a secure base of early reading skills.

¹ The early learning goals refer to the intended outcomes in six areas of learning for children at the start of Year 1. The areas for learning are: personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good, with particularly good provision for children to explore and investigate through play and practical activities.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Children receive a good level of support and as a result they achieve well in relation to their capabilities. However, there are weaknesses in the records kept to track their progress.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good. Children receive a good level of support; the majority quickly becomes confident in communicating ideas in English through gestures and short phrases.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Children are encouraged to appreciate the wonders of the world and to develop a good understanding of the needs of others. There is a strong multicultural dimension to the curriculum, encouraging celebration and appreciation of a range of cultures and traditions.
How well the school cares for its children	Very good. Children are well known by staff and there is a high level of commitment to meeting their individual needs.

The curriculum is well planned to provide an exciting range of opportunities for all areas of learning. Provision to promote children's physical and creative skills is excellent. Good attention is also paid to developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Staff work well as a team and there is strong commitment to improving the quality of provision for teaching and learning wherever possible.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are well informed and well organised to support the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are few formal monitoring systems in place, but good informal procedures for assessing the effectiveness of the school's provision.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Use of resources is very carefully planned to enhance the quality of learning.

The school is well led and managed. There is a very good level of staffing so that children's individual needs are recognised and met. The school makes imaginative use of resources; use of the budget is carefully planned to ensure best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school and make good progress• Teaching is good• They are well informed about how their children are doing• The school is well led and managed• Children are expected to work hard• Behaviour is good and children are encouraged to mature	<p>There were no areas of concern, other than the change in arrangements for transfer to infant schools. This is a decision made by the local education authority (LEA) and is outside the school's control.</p>

The above views are based on the comments made at a pre-inspection meeting attended by 14 parents and questionnaire returns by about 46 per cent of parents. A significant proportion of parents felt that they were unable to comment on some aspects of the school's work because, at the time of the inspection, their children had only been there for a few days.

The inspection team is happy to support parents' positive views and finds that their high degree of confidence in the school is fully justified.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Teaching is good and at times very good, ensuring that children make good progress

1. Throughout the school teaching is good and at times very good, ensuring that children make good progress and achieve well. Teaching has many good features and both teachers and nursery nurses work hard to successfully support children's learning in a variety of ways.
2. One of the very good features of teaching is the good use of resources to engage children's interest and to demonstrate and explain what they need to know to take their learning forward. This is evident, for example, in the effective use of books and support materials to teach early skills in reading. A teacher working with a group of the oldest children read an enlarged version of "Brown Bear" and then used a felt board to help the children to sequence the events in the story and to match the captions with the pictures. She drew attention to the initial sounds of the words and to letter shapes to help the children to find the right phrases. Children's progress was promoted as they 'read' the story back to the teacher using the storyboard to prompt their recall. Resources are also used well when children are involved in an activity that they have chosen independently, as, for example, when a nursery nurse suggested that some might use microscopes to look closely at the fish in the fishtank.
3. All staff make effective use of talk to instruct, to explain and to extend learning. This was a very good feature of work involving sorting fruit and vegetables into groups; the nursery nurse made good use of questions and observations to extend the children's own vocabulary, to promote their knowledge of the names of the fruits and vegetables and to encourage their close observation as they tried to find a matching pair. Talk was also used well as a teacher carefully explained to a child who had recently started school how scissors should be used. Cutting was clearly a new experience for the child but the teacher skilfully ensured that she had the scissors in the right position and then talked her through the activity as she worked independently. This enabled the child to begin to acquire a new skill and also to experience some success at a task that she found difficult.
4. The organisation of the teaching bases and the outside area in the school allow good opportunities for children to learn through exploration and investigation. In the creative area, for example, children get involved in role play, model making and a variety of art activities. They learn about the properties of a range of materials, when, for example, they use playdough, print with a variety of fruits and make models using recyclable materials. Inside and out they explore the properties of materials such as sand and water and engage in creative play as they make music or invent and act out a scenario in the home corner.
5. All staff pay good attention to promoting early literacy and numeracy skills. As a teacher read the story of "Henny Penny" she drew attention to the title of the book and the name of the author and used the illustration on the front cover to promote children's recall of the storyline. Her very expressive reading and judicious use of questions encouraged children to play close attention to what was happening to the main character, creating a wonderful sense of anticipation towards the end. She also drew attention to the initial sounds that the children were learning that featured in the book and there was good incidental teaching about building up words by using the

sound system. Regular opportunities are provided to reinforce skills in counting, for instance when staff ask the children to count the number present in a group and to find the corresponding digit from the number line on display. Mathematical language is skilfully introduced in the course of activities; as the children were making a variety of shapes with playdough the nursery nurse worked with them, explaining that she was trying to make pieces that were all the same length. In a lesson on identifying and matching shapes with some of the oldest children, the teacher drew their attention to where we might find shapes in the everyday world, for example cones to divert traffic or spheres in the play area.

6. The outcome of the good teaching is that children are well in line to attain the early learning goals. A good foundation is laid for their later learning in subjects of the national curriculum such as science. They also have a good basis of skills in literacy and numeracy and are well prepared for the more formal aspects of teaching in these areas that they will encounter when they move to infant schools.

Provision for children's personal development is very good, ensuring that they develop positive attitudes to learning

7. The school pays a high level of attention to supporting all aspects of children's personal and social development and provision for this aspect of learning is a very strong feature of its work.
8. Good routines are quickly established when children start school so that they become secure and confident in a new environment. When the register is taken, for example, all children are encouraged to respond but at different levels; some speak clearly and say "yes Ms ..." while others may nod or, with encouragement say "yes" and are praised for their efforts. Each session is run in a carefully structured way and children quickly learn to anticipate routines so they ask, for example, "is it time for the garden yet?". Children are encouraged to help with tidying up at the ends of sessions, often with a gentle reminder of the areas where they have spent time as they are asked to work with the staff to get the bases ready for the next session.
9. Children's personal and social skills are promoted well. In using the outside area, for example, a good range of wheeled toys used by pairs of children encourages them to work together and to take turns in being the driver and passenger. The use of a sandtimer by the computers enables children to time their activity and to change places with another when the sand runs out; those who are confident in a particular operation or use of a game on the computer are encouraged to stay and help the next child. In a session with a large group of children playing ring games outside, staff explained the importance of using space, listening to instructions and taking turns. Good use of praise and feedback encouraged the children to appreciate the need to work together and to help others by singing clearly and being ready to take their turn at a game. The system of focusing on individual children each week – the 'apple children' – and of giving them special jobs and privileges promotes their self-esteem. They are also involved in leading activities that contribute to the new children's understanding of routines. This system is also effective in enabling staff to monitor the children's experiences and progress so that the curriculum can be adjusted to meet their needs and to target the next stage in their learning.
10. Good use is made of photographs to celebrate children's achievements and to record their activities. These often emphasise collaborative activities as, for example, children share fruit and drinks or work together using construction equipment. There

is a strong emphasis throughout the nursery on celebration of success and praise is used frequently to reinforce the importance of thoughtfulness and consideration of others. There is also a strong multicultural dimension to the curriculum, celebrating the diversity of children's backgrounds and encouraging them to appreciate a range of cultures and traditions. Throughout the school, notices and signs are written in a variety of languages; parents and visitors add to these so that, for instance, the languages include Gujarati, Hindi, Welsh and French. A variety of festivals are celebrated and link with curriculum provision so that, for example, the children make hats for an Easter parade and learn about the importance of light in celebrating Diwali. Music from a variety of traditions is played as children work in the outside area; stories are available in dual language texts, acknowledging the range of languages with which parents and children might be familiar.

11. The outcome of this very good level of provision is evident in the very good attitudes to learning and relationships of the children. Boys and girls from a wide range of races and backgrounds learn to work and play together in a variety of situations. Older pupils often take responsibility for younger ones; at the time of the inspection one of the older boys was taking care of a new girl with special needs, explaining routines to her and sharing books and equipment as they worked together. The oldest children demonstrate a good level of self-confidence, interact well with adults and their peers and have very good personal and social skills. They are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Partnership with parents is strong and they are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning

12. The school has developed a wide range of effective strategies to inform parents and carers about all aspects of its work and to involve them in supporting their children's learning. There is extensive involvement with parents and carers before their children start education in the nursery and during the time that they are there.
13. Parents and carers of babies and toddlers have the opportunity to attend a weekly group run by a nursery nurse. The home-school liaison teacher together with a nursery nurse, also organises sessions that encourage children to try nursery activities before coming to the school and parents and carers to gain some insight into how children learn through play. All of these sessions create good opportunities to learn about the school's provision as well as providing informal support for parents and carers through talking about the challenges of bringing up young children. These activities are an important element in ensuring a smooth transition to school for the majority of children. All prospective parents are welcome to visit the school and have the opportunity for an individual discussion with the liaison teacher. Those parents touring the school during the inspection commented that they found this very informative and helpful and that the staff had been very welcoming. Home visits are also organised to explain nursery activities to parents and carers. Good use is made of photographs to do this, with captions provided in the main community languages.
14. When children are admitted to the nursery, parents and carers get good encouragement to support their learning. They are given weekly information sheets on what children will be learning in school and advice on how they can provide complementary activities at home. Story sacks have been developed on a variety of themes; these are available for loan and provide a wonderful collection of guidance, resources and ideas for activities that parents or carers and children can undertake at

home. The nursery also encourages parents to help with activities such as cooking, reading stories and working on the computer.

15. Staff are available at the end of each session to talk to the adults collecting the children. Parents and carers are made very welcome; they are brought into bases to collect children and staff take the opportunity to discuss any concerns or to highlight a child's achievements. The focus on individual children each week by the key workers overseeing their progress enables them to obtain good information for parents. A child's achievements and needs are discussed with parents or carers; written reports are regularly provided and very clear information is given on targets for the next stage in children's development.

The curriculum is broad and made interesting and exciting for the children

16. The school offers a rich curriculum that takes full account of all the recommended areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage². Planning is largely focused on themes that link the activities provided over one or two weeks; these themes cover a range of topics to which children can relate, such as 'favourites' or 'minibeasts'. Each of the three curriculum bases in the school is well organised to support children's learning in key areas, including language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge of the world around and creative and physical development. A careful balance is created between activities led or directed by an adult and those that can be chosen by the children themselves.
17. The most effective planning is securely based on the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. Learning aims for the activities on offer are clearly identified and this ensures that teaching has a clear focus and that key vocabulary is introduced and reinforced. In the literacy base, for example, the opportunity to promote the language associated with shopping was planned to link with work in the role play area which had been transformed into a supermarket. Some incidental opportunities to promote skills in literacy and numeracy in all curriculum areas are identified, but there is scope to extend these in terms of the opportunities for children to use their developing skills in writing.
18. The curriculum is often based on first-hand or topical experiences for the children. The visit of 'Farmer Bob' with a variety of animals for the children to handle or the arrival of a fire engine and fireman are used well to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Stories are also used effectively as starting points for creative activities and imaginative play; "Meg and Mog" led to work on role play in a magic kingdom and children created their own spells and drew and made captions for their own version of the story. There is an excellent range of opportunities for children to explore and investigate through, for example, observation of caterpillars and slugs and recording seasonal changes. The opportunity to incubate eggs and watch chicks hatch led to a very good range of work on "Chicken Shelly" as the children created their own story about the chick's arrival with comments such as 'isn't he beautiful?'
19. The outside area is very well resourced to extend and consolidate the work that goes on in curriculum bases. There is excellent provision for children's physical development as they use climbing equipment and wheeled toys and learn to throw

² The Foundation Stage refers the education provided for children from the age of three until they begin work in the national curriculum at the start of Year 1.

and catch balls and beanbags. Garden areas and a pond enable observation of environmental changes and children are encouraged to become involved in planting and caring for plants so that they become aware of the conditions for growth. In addition to these opportunities, good links are made with activities on offer in curriculum bases inside, so that, for example, children using the outside area can draw and paint, use sand and water and participate in role play in the “baker’s shop”. The school has found this to be very successful in encouraging boys in particular to become engaged in more sedentary activities that help to promote learning in areas such as literacy.

20. Children’s experiences in all aspects of the curriculum are carefully monitored by their key workers³. This ensures that they are encouraged to try new activities, are helped where they are having any difficulties and have access to a balanced curriculum.

The head and staff constantly seek improvements to the quality of teaching and learning

21. All staff, with good support from governors, are committed to improving the quality of education provided by the school. This is evident in the planning for school improvement and the imaginative use made of funding to improve resources for the children and the wider community.
22. The school improvement plan clearly identifies the intended enhancement of curriculum areas, staff training and resource improvements. Last year, for example, there was a particular focus on improving staff’s skills in ICT so that work with computers and other forms of technology could have a higher status in the curriculum. A programme of staff training has ensured that a range of programs is available to the children and that staff make more use of computers for aspects of their work such as curriculum planning. The introduction of a digital camera has had a powerful impact; children’s work and achievements can be instantly recorded and displayed and the photographs are also used effectively to contribute to the record of children’s progress. A performance management policy has been established to facilitate regular appraisal of the staff’s work and a new record-keeping system has been introduced to link with curriculum planning for the Foundation Stage.
23. Grants are used well to improve facilities for teaching and learning. A nature area and pond were established in the outside area to promote early work in science; new climbing equipment with a safety surface has improved provision for physical development. The erection of a large cover enables use of the outside area in all weathers, as well as a waiting area for parents and carers on wet days. Perhaps the greatest success of the school in recent years, however, has been the establishment of a community room with a staffing allocation to support a variety of activities for parents or carers and pre-school providers. A teacher has a part-time responsibility for parental liaison and runs introductory sessions for parents and pre-school children. Training sessions for pre-school providers in the locality are run by teachers, covering areas such as using books with young children and providing role play and art and craft activities. These sessions enable staff to share their expertise with others as well as supporting their own professional development. Each member of staff has a particular link with at least two pre-school providers and acts as a mentor and adviser, sharing ideas and giving practical help with planning and organisation.

³ These are the teachers or nursery nurses who have particular responsibility for individual children.

The school has also devised a loans service for providers with an excellent range of resources and suggestions for extending story-based work into all areas of learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Systems for tracking the progress of children with special educational needs

24. The school provides a good level of support for children with special educational needs. There is no doubt that they benefit from this; samples of their work and reports to parents show that they make good progress in their learning. There are, however, weaknesses in the way in which their individual education plans (IEPs) identify targets for the next stage in their development and the progress that they make.
25. IEPs are usually introduced when it is identified that children may have a significant difficulty with learning, or a physical or medical condition that warrants additional support. However, although some children are identified as having special needs when they are admitted to school because they have had long-term involvement with outside agencies, IEPs for these children are not always formulated immediately, although additional support may be allocated at this stage. The targets in the IEPs are often too vague to clearly focus the work of the support staff and to assess children's progress, suggesting, for example, a need for the child 'to interact with staff and to use some words' or 'to participate in a range of activities through the nursery'. The progress the children make is not recorded against the targets set, possibly because they are too vague to enable an accurate assessment. Dates of reviews and those present are not formally recorded; there is no indication of parental involvement in reviews or in the formulation of targets so the role of parents in supporting their children's learning is not clear.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to further improve the quality of education provided by the school, governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Ensure that individual education plans (IEPs) for children with special needs:
 - are formulated as soon as it is established that a child has a need for extra support;
 - include clear and specific targets against which a child's progress can be assessed;
 - systematically record the names of those present at, and the outcomes of, reviews of children's progress.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	13
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	0	2	9	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	18	82	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 eight 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)	80
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	25

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.8

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)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	175

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	247,200
Total expenditure	280,875
Expenditure per pupil	3,511
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,638
Balance carried forward to next year	10,414

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	160
Number of questionnaires returned	55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	15	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	55	29	4	0	13
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	33	0	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	27	13	4	33
The teaching is good.	64	22	0	0	15
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	31	5	5	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	22	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	24	4	2	20
The school works closely with parents.	51	27	5	0	16
The school is well led and managed.	71	18	0	0	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	22	4	0	15
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	18	7	2	22