

INSPECTION REPORT

ARKSEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Arksey

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique reference number: 106676

Headteacher: Mr W G Smith

Reporting inspector: Mrs H E Davies
21687

Dates of inspection: 9th - 11th September 2002

Inspection number: 246615

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Arksey Primary School Ings Way Arksey Doncaster South Yorkshire
Postcode:	DN5 0TE
Telephone number:	01302 874432
Fax number:	01302 820844
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Fairhurst
Date of previous inspection:	02/02/1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	11
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	12
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	13

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Arksey Primary School is situated in the village of Arksey on the periphery of Doncaster. The locality is broadly average in terms of social and economic advantage. The majority of pupils are of white ethnic background. At present there are 105 pupils on roll, 60 boys and 45 girls aged four to eleven. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is generally below average overall. Some year groups are small so care needs to be taken with interpreting the data. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, 11 per cent, is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, most for learning difficulties, 4 per cent, is well below the national average. At present, two pupils have statements of special educational needs. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Six percent of pupils come from travelling backgrounds. Children start school in the September of the school year that they become five. At the time of the inspection there were seven children in the Foundation Stage, in the mixed age Reception Class.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Arksey Primary School is an effective school with many strengths, it provides a good education for its pupils. By the age of 11 pupils attain academic standards that are well above national expectations. Pupils of all ages have good attitudes to school; they enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. The school is led and managed satisfactorily. All pupils, including travellers, are fully engaged in the activities that the school offers. The school has above average funding and provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above average compared to similar schools.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to school.
- Pupils' personal development and their relationships are good; pupils grow in confidence as they move through the school.
- Provision for social, moral and cultural development is good.

What could be improved

- The school could improve its procedures and documentation in relation to the care of pupils.
- Attendance could be improved.
- The curriculum could be enriched by re-introducing extra-curricular activities for pupils.

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 improvements since its previous inspection in February 1998. The school has raised the standards that pupils achieve in designing skills in design and technology and in listening and appraising in music. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved it is now good in Years 3 to 6. The school development plan is a more effective document that prioritises areas for improvement appropriately. Staff work hard and are committed to improvement. They plan the curriculum satisfactorily. However, the curriculum is still not supported by up to date documentation.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	C	A	A
Mathematics	C	C	B	A
Science	B	B	A	A

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

National curriculum tests in 2001 showed that when compared to all schools results for eleven year olds were above average in mathematics and well above average in English and science. They have improved over recent years broadly in line with national trends. In comparison with similar schools (where similar numbers of pupils are entitled to free school meals) results were well above average in all three subjects. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils in Year 6 are attaining standards that are ahead of national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Tests also showed that by the age of seven pupils results were not as high as eleven year olds. They were average in mathematics, below average in writing and well below average in reading. Inspection evidence suggests that when children enter the school their levels of attainment are varied but in many year groups they are below average overall. Some year groups are small so care needs to be taken with interpreting the statistics as one pupil may represent a larger than average percentage which may effect the overall grades. Standards are improving for younger children who now make a good start to their education and more than previously are likely to attain the early learning goals (nationally expected standards). They continue to make good progress so that by the age of seven many pupils are now likely to achieve average standards in mathematics, writing and reading. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good, often very good, progress through the school and are likely to achieve above average standards. The school sets realistic targets for national assessment results based on careful assessment of what pupils are capable of achieving. All groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their levels of attainment. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 6 regularly achieve the above average level 5 in English, mathematics and science.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school they work hard and try to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils understand the school rules and abide by them. They behave well in lessons, at playtime and lunchtime. They are clear about the expectations that the school has for behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils work and play together well. They form good relationships with each other and with the adults in the school.
Attendance	Below the national average. This is mainly because of many family holidays taken in term time. This is an area for improvement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. This is better than at the previous inspection when teaching in Years 3 to 6 was judged to be satisfactory overall. Almost all the teaching observed during the inspection was good or better. Some very good teaching was observed in each key stage. Newer teachers are making a positive impact on standards achieved by pupils. Teachers are committed to raising standards for all pupils. They work together well to plan an appropriate curriculum for pupils. Teachers plan work in accordance with the national literacy and numeracy strategies, and use a topic approach based usually on a scientific theme for other subjects. As most classes have a two-year age range, teachers follow a rolling programme of topics so that work is not usually repeated for pupils. Teachers make learning interesting for pupils. They explain clearly what is required in lessons so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and academic achievement. In a very good science lesson pupils worked together to investigate which materials would conduct electricity effectively. The teacher established clearly what they needed to do, provided the relevant resources and encouraged pupils to collaborate in sharing ideas and coming to accurate conclusions. Teaching of English and mathematics is good. In a very good literacy lesson in Year 2 the teacher used her questioning skills very well to help pupils recall and structure a story correctly. In satisfactory lessons not so much emphasis was given to pupils participation as speakers. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and used effectively in lessons. During their final year in school pupils in Year 6 are taught as a small group for literacy and numeracy this makes a positive impact on the standards they achieve particularly for the higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and good individual education plans are in place to specify clear targets for learning. Support assistants work well, particularly in helping those pupils who have special educational needs. The school receives visits from specialist teachers to support different groups of pupils in the school effectively. Pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to learn, which has a positive impact on the standards they attain. Pupils work hard and achieve well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. However, curriculum time allocation is below that recommended in Years 3 to 6. In the Foundation Stage the early learning goals are now in place. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. In Years 1 to 6 the national literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented effectively. The school has adopted, but not adapted, government guidelines in all other subjects. At present there are no extra curricular activities for pupils. This is a weakness and an area for improvement.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The special educational needs co-ordinator works effectively with class teachers to prepare informative individual education plans for pupils. These clearly identify learning targets for pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for moral, social and cultural development, although informal, is good. It is satisfactory for spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Statutory assessments are undertaken appropriately. Assessment of personal development is satisfactory and support and guidance given to pupils by teachers is sound. Pupil's planners provide a good means of exchanging information between pupils, parents and teachers. However, procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety are informal. Documentation is not reviewed and updated on a regular basis. This is unsatisfactory and an area for improvement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher is supportive of staff and ensures that most of the aims of the school are implemented appropriately. He is supported well by his deputy. All staff are committed to improvement. They work together closely as a team and share expertise and information well. Teachers ensure that planning for and implementation of the National Curriculum is satisfactory. However, the sound classroom practice is not supported by secure whole school documentation. This was the case at the previous inspection. Whole school procedures relating to care of pupils and monitoring of attendance are informal and not monitored rigorously enough.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Governors are proud of the school's achievements and support it appropriately. They were involved effectively in recent good staff appointments. However, they are not all familiar with and do not ensure that all policies and procedures are fully implemented.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Results of assessments are analysed carefully and used to set targets appropriately. The headteacher and deputy monitor teaching and learning in all classes effectively. The previous inspection noted that the school development plan was underdeveloped. It has improved. The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and reviewing subjects has correctly been identified as a priority as most policy documents are due for review and do not reflect the current good practice.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Accommodation, staff and resources are used appropriately. The finance sub committee meets once a term and has agreed a best value statement. However, they do not consult widely, for example, with parents, to see what they would like provided out side of the statutory curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like school. • That behaviour is good. • That teaching is good. • That their children make good progress. • That the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. • That the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like more homework. • Many parents would like extra curricular activities.

The inspection team agrees with all of the positive comments made by parents. The inspection team agrees that extra-curricular provision needs improving. The team judge that the use of homework is satisfactory overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above national average compared to similar schools.

1. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well. Samples of pupils work from last year confirmed that high standards were achieved in English, mathematics and science. During the inspection high standards were observed in lessons. Pupils work hard to achieve their best. They speak confidently and listen carefully and accurately to each other and to their teachers. In an excellent speaking and listening lesson, pupils achieved high standards. They had very good opportunities to demonstrate their skills. Presentations showed that thought and care had been taken. They took very good account of the audience and ordered their work very effectively. Pupils listened to each other carefully and asked pertinent questions showing a good level of understanding and interest. In a very good mathematics lesson pupils learnt effectively how to develop strategies for multiplying by 50 quickly and accurately. Pupils put considerable effort into their work to develop ideas and find the methods that suited them best to arrive at a correct answer. In a science lesson, they demonstrated an increasing knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties as they worked eagerly on a task to investigate which materials would or would not conduct electricity. They used the correct scientific language and were aware of safety considerations. Pupils recorded their work carefully, using accurate scientific vocabulary and labelling their diagrams correctly.

The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school

2. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. Almost all the teaching observed during the inspection was good or better. Some very good teaching was observed in each key stage. Although the children in the Foundation Stage had only been in school for a few days, good routines ensured that they felt happy and secure when left by their parent or carer. This had a positive impact on their ability to settle into school and learn effectively. The teachers' effective planning, clear learning objectives and well-organised classroom provision characterised the teaching in the Foundation Stage. A very good lesson enabled children to begin to develop independence as learners by planning what they would do, undertaking the task and then reviewing their work. Many activities were available to the children, for example, painting, cutting and sticking, imaginative role-play and model making. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching is characterised by very good management of pupils and positive use of praise. Learning objectives are made clear to pupils, ensuring that they understand what is required of them. In a very good literacy lesson, the teacher's good use of time and brisk pace maintained challenge and kept pupils interest. In Years 3 to 6, teachers set clear expectations of behaviour and academic work. Lessons follow a definite structure and pupils know what is expected of them. Management of pupils is good and in the best lessons relationships are very good and pupils work hard and enjoy their learning. Learning support assistants work hard to support pupils effectively. Pupils are fully engaged in their learning. The needs of different groups of pupils are met well. For example, a small group of lower attaining pupils in Year 3, receive additional literacy support on a regular basis to develop their reading and writing skills. Traveller pupils are fully integrated in the life of the school and extra support is available, if required, from a teacher who specialises in the needs of travelling pupils.

Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to school

3. In lessons and around the school pupils behave well. In all classes rules are agreed and clearly displayed. For example, in class 3 pupils wrote their own sentences about how to behave in class using words such as sensible, smart, honest and polite to describe their behaviour. Pupils understand what is required of them and work hard to be recognised for good behaviour. In class

2 pupils use a “class mat” to record a variety of helpful actions from the previous day. They are also aware of sanctions if they behave inappropriately. Pupils enjoy school and are keen and eager to attend. Pupils work well together on tasks and help each other if needed. At break times and lunchtime, they follow the rules and play together amicably. The “Red Caps” are on duty to help and support those who are new to the school or uncertain about what to do. Pupils take care of the equipment and are polite to each other. At lunchtime they sit and eat their lunch quietly and chat happily to each other. In lessons, they listen to each other and to their teachers politely. They understand that, for the school to be a happy place they have a responsibility to follow the rules.

Pupils’ personal development and their relationships are good; pupils grow in confidence as they move through the school

4. Pupils’ personal development within a ‘family’ atmosphere is good. This is true for the youngest to the oldest pupils, enabling them to develop a sense of ‘belonging’. Older pupils show a sense of responsibility and care for the younger pupils. Some classroom displays remind pupils of the need to care for each other and live together harmoniously. Relationships are good. Pupils like and trust their teachers. Teachers ensure pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are included in the life and work of their classes. Pupils show initiative and are willing to take responsibility. For example, the ‘Red Caps’ taking the play equipment out at playtime for all pupils and then returning it to the correct place at the end of playtime. Pupils notice what needs to be done and do it; at lunchtime they help younger children. They are involved in the daily routines of school taking registers to the office, helping midday supervisors and performing a range of in-class jobs, tidying and caring for resources and books. Older pupils plan and organize their work well. They set up the computers for younger pupils and organize the screen and projector for singing. They are considerate and helpful to each other.

Provision for social, moral and cultural development is good

5. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong, and respect the traditions, values and beliefs of others. The school encourages pupils to think of how their actions affect others. Teachers enable pupils to explore issues of importance to them via “circle time”. Pupils take it in turns to discuss moral issues such as those concerning behaviour. Pupils support each other with worries and problems. Caring for each other is encouraged in the roles and responsibilities pupils have round the school. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to know about the local area by inviting visitors into school such as, the local policeman. Local people are invited into school for special events for example, the harvest festival, carol concerts and the nativity. The summer musical evening enables pupils to share their talents by performing to their fellow pupils and parents. Pupils are encouraged to learn about different peoples around the world and the backgrounds of those who have settled into the local area. Stories by a range of authors and about children from different cultures are studied in literacy work. For example, books such as ‘Handa’s Surprise’ and ‘Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain’ introduce pupils to the clothes, foods, climate and lives of children from the Caribbean and Africa.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The school could improve its procedures and documentation in relation to the care of its pupils

6. Most teachers know their pupils well and are adept at identifying any concerns that pupils might have. They show care and concern for pupils’ well being. However, procedures are informal and documentation is out of date. There is a designated child protection person and staff are aware that they have responsibilities in this area, but there is no written policy or guidance. There is a health and safety policy but this has not been updated for at least two years, since, for example, it nominates as a first aider a person who has left the school. At present there is only one qualified

first aider in school. The headteacher and caretaker carry out informal risk assessments of the premises. However, no formal objective assessments are carried out in accordance with the policy and no governor participates in this aspect of school life. The policy for racial harmony has not been completed or ratified by governors.

Attendance could be improved

7. The previous inspection identified the monitoring of attendance as underdeveloped. This is still the case. The attendance statistics for 2001/02 were lower than 2000/01. Statistics show that attendance in 2001/02 was 92.5%. This is below the national average and puts the school in the lowest 30% of primary schools nationally. Parents co-operate with the school in explaining pupils' absences so that the level of unauthorised absence is very low, and pupils arrive punctually at school. The school procedures for registration, annotating registers and rewarding pupils with 100% attendance are satisfactory, and the school rarely has to call upon the support of the welfare officer from the local education authority regarding pupils who are persistently absent. Scrutiny of the registers makes it clear that the major factor adversely affecting the attendance statistics is the frequency of pupils being taken on family holidays during term time.

The curriculum could be enriched by re-introducing extra curricular activities for pupils

8. During the school day, planned visits linked to topics being studied are undertaken each term. Older pupils have the opportunity to benefit from a residential visit. At the time of the previous inspection the curriculum was enhanced by a number of extra-curriculum activities. These included football, basketball, line dancing and music club. However, at present there are no after school or lunch time extra-curricular activities provided for pupils, that would enrich their learning outside the school day. The school introduced football via a professional coach last year but interest waned. Parents, at their meeting, and many answering the questionnaires raised this as an issue. They would like to see some extra-curricular activities including some sporting activities offered. This area of school life has been identified as an area for development by the school for two years.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

9. At Arksey Primary School many pupils achieve above average standards by the age of eleven. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Personal development is good. To improve even more the headteacher, staff and governors should:
 - improve the informal procedures and documentation in relation to the care of pupils by: ensuring that child protection and health and safety policies and procedures are up to date and working effectively in the school. (Paragraph 6)
 - improve levels of attendance by: ensuring that parents are made more aware of the need to send their children to school so that their children may benefit from what the school has to offer. (Paragraph 7)
 - re-introduce extra-curricular activities, so that pupils learning outside the school day is enriched. (Paragraph 8)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	5	3	0	0	0
Percentage	6	40	33	20	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	105
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	4

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance2000/01

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	7	6	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (71)	85 (76)	100 (86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	62 (71)	77 (86)	85 (86)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

**Only totals shown as both boys and girls numbers are below ten.*

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	7	12	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (90)	84 (90)	100 (90)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (80)	95 (60)	100 (80)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

*Only totals shown as boys numbers are below ten.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	91	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	93

Financial year	200/01
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	£
Total income	331647
Total expenditure	326266
Expenditure per pupil	3168
Balance brought forward from previous year	20521

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
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Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
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Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
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Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	105
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.	50	50	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	36	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	46	10	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	44	21	4	2
The teaching is good.	65	31	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	46	4	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	35	10	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	48	13	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	48	32	11	7	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	46	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	23	31	23	6

Not all totals add to 100 because of rounding and nil response.