

INSPECTION REPORT

THE QUINTA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Congleton

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111041

Headteacher: Mr M Howard

Reporting inspector: Mr John D Eadie
20191

Dates of inspection: 10th to 12th March 2003

Inspection number: 247074

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: Ullswater Road
Congleton
Cheshire

Postcode: CW12 4LX

Telephone number: 01260 273269

Fax number: 01260 297042

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr V B Atkin

Date of previous inspection: 2nd to 6th March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6 - 9
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 - 13
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	14 - 18

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number on roll aged 4 to 11 308 (larger than average)
Of these, 41 are of reception age in a reception and a mixed-age reception and Year 1 class.

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	4.9% (below average)
Percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English	0%
Percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs	9.1% (below average)
Percentage of pupils with statements of their special educational needs	1.3% (broadly average)

The school is situated in a residential area on the edge of the Cheshire market town of Congleton. It is a popular school and draws its pupils from all parts of Congleton and some surrounding towns and villages. Virtually all the pupils are of white British heritage. Most pupils with special educational needs have difficulty with their reading and writing. When they start at the school, most children have above average levels of attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Quinta Primary School is a very good school. Standards are well above average by the time the pupils leave and they achieve well, due to the very good teaching. The pupils' personal development is very good and the curriculum is particularly broad and stimulating. The leadership and management of the school are very good overall, and the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils make good progress and they achieve standards that are well above average by the time they leave.
- The quality of teaching and learning is a strength of the school.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good overall.
- The curriculum is particularly broad and balanced and gives the pupils very good opportunities to learn. The curriculum for the children of reception age is very effectively planned.
- The provision for the pupils' personal development is very good. Consequently the pupils have very positive attitudes to their school and their work, and their behaviour is exemplary.

What could be improved

There are no significant areas for development for this school.

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 March 1998 and has made good progress since then. Standards have remained well above average. The key issues from that inspection have been addressed well. For example, the teachers now have high expectations of the pupils, particularly in the areas of experimental and investigative work in mathematics and science. There is a very good commitment to continued improvement and the school is well placed to move forward and continue to sustain high standards.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. The similar schools referred to are those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	B	C
Mathematics	A*	A	A	A
Science	A	A	A	B

Key	
top five per cent	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Evidence from the inspection confirms that standards are well above average in Year 6. Pupils read widely and write interesting and correctly spelt prose and poetry. In mathematics, pupils calculate quickly and apply their knowledge very well to solve problems. Standards are above average in Year 2. Standards in the national tests in Year 2 in 2002 were in the top five per cent of all schools in mathematics. They were above average in writing and average in reading. The standards in the tests in Year 6 have been consistently well above average for some years. The targets set for attainment in the tests in Year 6 in English and mathematics were not achieved. This was because a number of pupils left and others joined between the targets being set and the tests. The pupils who joined were not as able as those who left. The pupils achieve well during their time in the school. This is true for pupils of all abilities. Those with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well. Good provision is made for those who have particular gifts and talents and they too make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastically involved in all the school has to offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around the school is very good. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils are developing very well into mature and responsible young citizens capable of thinking for themselves. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Rates of attendance are well above the national average. Pupils generally arrive at school on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good and the pupils learn the skills of literacy and numeracy very well. The teaching has many strengths. One of the most notable is the way that the teachers make their teaching exciting and relevant by linking work in different subjects and using a wide variety of differing methods and resources. In many lessons the pupils have practical tasks to complete and this ensures their interest and enthusiasm are maintained. In many of the books that inspectors looked at, the quality of marking was very good. The comments made, clearly noted by pupils, help the pupils to make progress. The teachers have high expectations of both their pupils' behaviour and performance. A very good working environment is created and the pupils rise to these expectations and work very hard. The teachers meet the needs of all pupils very well. There are high levels of challenge for all, whatever their ability, and very good provision is made for those with special educational needs and those with particular gifts and talents. On the few occasions when teaching is no better than satisfactory, the teachers' expectations are not so high and the pace of lessons is not as brisk.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a particularly broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. A particular strength is the way in which the teachers integrate work in different subjects. The teachers use visits very well to support learning and make it more interesting.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs. Individual plans are tailored very effectively to meet the specific needs of these pupils. Class teachers are closely involved in drawing up these plans and are therefore using them well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. Many opportunities are planned to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a safe, clean, caring and welcoming place for the pupils. Procedures for checking on the pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection and are beginning to be used to help the pupils to progress faster.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher manages the school very effectively. Delegation is a strength and those in management positions are given strong support. Staff with responsibilities are trusted and are very effective in their roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are knowledgeable and involved and contribute significantly to the success of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very good at analysing its strengths and areas for development and puts in place highly effective plans to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	All resources available to the school are used very well. The school seeks all ways of obtaining the best possible value for money in its spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour is good. • Their children like school. • Their children are expected to work hard. • Teaching is good. • Their children are making good progress. • Staff are approachable. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about their children's progress. • The school working more closely with parents. • Levels of homework.

As can be seen from earlier sections of this report, the inspection team agrees with all positive parental comments. With regard to the areas that some parents would like to see improved, the judgement of the inspection team is that:

- parents receive satisfactory information about their children's progress;
- the school works hard to involve parents in the work of the school and parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning;
- the teachers make very good use of homework and it makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The pupils make good progress and they achieve standards that are well above average by the time they leave.

1. The pupils make good progress and achieve well above average standards overall by the time they leave. These standards are particularly good in mathematics and science. They are better in these two subjects than in English for a number of reasons. The major reason is that in both subjects the curriculum is taught in a way that encourages mathematical and scientific thinking. For example, every Friday all classes have a session of mathematical problem-solving which is giving the pupils very good opportunities to improve their mathematical reasoning and apply their learning. This was exemplified by the way in which the oldest pupils applied their knowledge to finding the areas of compound shapes. Pupils of all ability levels were successful in this. In science, the subject is taught using an investigative and experimental approach. This is deepening the pupils' understanding. In English, standards are not quite so high because there are a number of pupils who join the school in Years 3 to 6 with lower levels of attainment in English. Even so, the pupils produce plenty of imaginative writing in a wide variety of styles. For example, some very good humorous poems were seen during the inspection.
2. In the national tests for seven-year-olds, standards have been consistently high in mathematics for three years. In reading and writing they were well above average in 2000 and 2001, but dropped in 2002. This was because there was a higher number of pupils than usual in this group who had problems with their reading and writing. The high average test results in mathematics are due to the very high proportion of pupils who achieved above the expected level; nearly two-thirds of the group who took the tests in 2002 achieved Level 3. Judgements of the inspection are that standards in the current Year 2 are above average in English, mathematics and science. There is a higher proportion of pupils than usual with special educational needs (SEN) in this group. Results for the national tests for eleven-year-olds show at least well above average results in mathematics and science for the last three years. In English they were well above average until 2002, when they slipped for reasons given above.
3. The pupils make at least good progress through the school. This is largely due to the very good quality teaching. The pupils with SEN make good progress relative to their abilities due to the good levels of support and the very good quality individual plans that are made for their learning. Their class teachers create these, in consultation with the co-ordinator for SEN. These plans are not only related very clearly to the pupils' specific needs, but the involvement of their class teachers means that they are constantly able to reinforce the learning needed. The pupils with specific gifts and talents are also making good progress. A number have been identified and special provision is made for them. For example, the headteacher takes the most able group for mathematics in Year 6.

The quality of teaching and learning is a strength of the school.

4. The quality of teaching is very good overall and the pupils consequently learn very well. In half of lessons observed it was very good or better and in about nine out of ten lessons it was at least good. There are a number of major strengths to the teaching. The teachers make lessons very interesting by the use of a wide variety of methods

and resources. In many lessons there is very good use of practical work which increases the pupils' understanding considerably. For example, in a mathematics lesson with Year 2 pupils, the teacher took the pupils outside and made very effective use of a paved area to introduce the concept of co-ordinates on a grid. The pupils were enthusiastically involved in this and all, including those with SEN, quickly understood the concept.

5. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils. There are very clear expectations of good behaviour and the pupils are expected to work hard. The pupils rise to the challenge of these expectations and there is a very good working atmosphere in lessons, with the pupils putting in a great deal of effort. For example in a lesson observed with a lower ability mathematics set in Year 6, one boy persevered for a considerable time to try to solve a problem on compound shapes; perseverance which paid off as he was ultimately successful. In a Year 6 science lesson, a girl was determined to succeed in clearing oil from the top of salt water during a lesson on pollution and was absorbed in the task for a long spell. In the small number of less successful lessons, where the teaching is no better than satisfactory, the teachers do not have such high expectations. The pace of these lessons is not so fast and the pupils are not so involved. This was seen during the inspection when young pupils were sitting listening for some time to an explanation of something that most had already understood. The pupils became restless and the pace of learning dropped.
6. The teachers plan and organise their lessons very well. Very good examples of this were seen in lessons in the reception class and the class for reception children and Year 1 pupils. In these lessons, the teachers have a marvellous range of activities planned, which enthuse and interest the children. In the mixed-age class, there are very well-planned activities appropriate for each of the age groups. The teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. They know them and their needs very well. The pupils respond very well to this and there is a relaxed atmosphere created, with an air of mutual purpose and respect.
7. The pupils have very good knowledge of their own learning as the teachers have the learning objectives¹ displayed. They almost always draw attention to them at the beginning of the lesson and invariably return to them at the end of the lesson, often to ask the pupils how successful they think their learning has been. The system of target setting, although fairly new, is helping the pupils to gain further understanding of their own learning and what they need to learn next. The targets set are clearly understood but are not yet sufficiently precise or achievable in the short term to be really successful in raising pupils' rates of progress. The teachers in almost all classes use marking very well indeed. Their comments are extremely helpful to the pupils, and the pupils note these comments and act on them. The teachers also use homework very well. It is planned thoughtfully and is very relevant to what the pupils are covering in lessons. The homework diary is a most useful booklet, which makes it entirely clear to parents what their children should be doing.

The quality of leadership and management is very good overall.

8. The headteacher manages the school very effectively. He has delegated responsibilities very well. The deputy and co-ordinators are highly efficient and produce very good plans for development in their areas of responsibility. For example, the school has completed some rigorous analysis of the national test results and has put

¹ Learning objectives are the skills, knowledge and understanding that the teacher is aiming that the pupils should learn during the lesson.

in place strategies for addressing the issues arising. One good example of this is the work done by the school to address the underperformance of boys compared to girls in English, as shown up by the school's analysis. Reading books, specifically to interest the boys, have been purchased and teachers are very aware in their lessons of the need to encourage boys to succeed. The deputy headteacher, key stage co-ordinators and subject co-ordinators play a major role in the leadership of the school as they are very involved, with the headteacher, in monitoring of standards. There is a clear corporate view of the way forward for the school and, because of the headteacher's skills of delegation, very good teamwork amongst all staff. There are very good systems in place to ensure that staff new to the school are quickly made to feel valued members of the team.

9. The school is very successful at evaluating the effectiveness of what it is doing. There are a number of systems in place to check what is going on. Co-ordinators keep a careful check on the teachers' planning to ensure that the curriculum is being followed correctly. The headteacher, local authority advisors and co-ordinators check the quality of teaching and learning in classes. This is one of the factors that has ensured that the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. A further major factor in the success of the school is the very good arrangements that are made for appraisal and professional development. There is a culture of mutual support and a desire to improve that is ensuring continual progress. The governors are knowledgeable and effective in their support and are instrumental in the development of the school.
10. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive document. It contains relevant elements for development in a wide range of areas. For example, each co-ordinator produces plans for development in their subject. These plans are costed, with indications of how they are to be monitored. However, there is no clear indication of the priorities for development, which, with so much planned for each year, leads to a slight lack of clarity about what is really important to the school. All funds available to the school are used very well. Although there has been a substantial carry-forward of funds in the last two years, this has been retained for significant developments planned by the school. For example, improvements are planned to the play area for the youngest children and the toilets are to be upgraded.

The curriculum is particularly broad and balanced and gives the pupils very good opportunities to learn. The curriculum for the children of reception age is very effectively planned.

11. The curriculum provided for the pupils is broad, balanced and particularly relevant for the pupils. One of its major strengths is the way that the teachers integrate the subjects of the curriculum. For example, in science lessons observed with the older pupils, the project on materials was linked to the geography work on coastlines as well as work done at the recent residential visit. This resulted in the pupils learning very effectively about the properties of oil and at the same time the effects of pollution and the difficulties of dealing with an oil spill. In a physical education (PE) lesson in Year 2, the teacher used a programmable toy to demonstrate quarter and half turns linked with the pupils' work in mathematics and information and communication technology. The relevance and links made between learning in different subjects gave the pupils much greater understanding of their turns while jumping in the PE lesson.
12. Planning is very good in all subjects. It is particularly good for the youngest pupils of reception age. In both the class of reception age children and in the class with both reception children and Year 1 pupils, a wide range of relevant activities is planned.

These activities ensure that these children make at least good progress in all the nationally recommended areas of learning.

13. A further major strength of the curriculum is the range and relevance of visits made to enhance the pupils' learning. For example, as part of their work in geography, a Year 3 class has made a visit to a major road project that is taking place close to the school. They have spoken to surveyors, contractors and road safety officers as well as seeing plans of the work to be done. The resultant learning of local geography and the impact of traffic on town centres has been very good. There is also a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities. As well as a range of sporting activities there are a variety of musical clubs, an art club and many other opportunities.

The provision for the pupils' personal development is very good. Consequently the pupils have very positive attitudes to their school and their work and their behaviour is exemplary.

14. Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. This results in exemplary standards of behaviour, the pupils' very positive attitudes to their school and their work and the constructive relationships that exist within the school. The major strength in this area is the way that the pupils are encouraged to think for themselves. For example, speaking skills are encouraged from an early age and by the time they are in Year 6, the pupils are articulate, interesting to talk to and are beginning to form their own opinions. The pupils are very much encouraged to be independent and use their initiative from an early age. This is shown in many small ways, with pupils seeing what needs doing and getting on with it, without being asked.
15. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is very good. Assemblies provide a time for focused reflection and there are a number of opportunities in lessons for the pupils to reflect on the wider world and creation. The provision for personal, social and health education makes a significant contribution in raising the pupils' self-esteem. The success of the provision for the pupils' moral and social development is seen in their behaviour and development as citizens. There is a very clear moral code in the school, with all adults being excellent role models. The pupils are involved in the setting of the code of conduct for their own class and respond very well to this. The school is very orderly and pupils are well mannered and thoughtful. The pupils agree that bullying and oppressive behaviour are not a part of this school, and any very rare instances are regarded seriously by all. Although it is not easy for the school to give the pupils a knowledge of the wide range of cultures represented in Britain today as this area is not representative of the country as a whole, strenuous efforts are made to ensure that their cultural development is very good. Within the curriculum, a wide range of cultures is explored. For example, links have been established with a community in Mexico as part of a geography project. The school holds a cultural week during the year to raise the profile of the multi-cultural nature of society. Local and national culture is a major part of the curriculum and the pupils are given a very good understanding of local historical events and geographical features.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	12	10	3	0	0	0
Percentage	3.8	46.2	38.5	11.5	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 almost four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	308
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	28

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	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	23	26	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	22	22
	Girls	26	26	26
	Total	47	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (93)	98 (98)	98 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	22
	Girls	26	26	26
	Total	48	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (96)	98 (100)	98 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	23	16	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	23
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	32	35	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (96)	90 (98)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	23
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	33	35	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (94)	90 (87)	100 (92)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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	243	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	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	12	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

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	28.0

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	133

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	581 796
Total expenditure	582 620
Expenditure per pupil	1 917
Balance brought forward from previous year	54 447
Balance carried forward to next year	53 623

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

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	308
Number of questionnaires returned	85

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	39	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	45	1	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	52	0	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	49	16	0	1
The teaching is good.	65	31	1	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	49	21	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	40	2	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	44	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	28	52	18	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	42	1	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	53	4	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	40	11	2	8

Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding