INSPECTION REPORT

OTHERY VILLAGE SCHOOL

Othery, near Bridgwater

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number:123691

Headteacher: Mrs. M.E.White

Reporting inspector: Mrs Janet Watts OIN: 1945

Dates of inspection: 11-12 February 2003

Inspection number: 248490

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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Othery

Bridgwater Somerset

Postcode: TA7 0PX

Telephone number: 01823 698464

Fax number: 01823 698464

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs P. Gange-Harris

Date of previous inspection: 3rd November 2003

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Othery Village School is a smaller than average size primary school. There are 66 boys and girls on roll, aged from four to eleven. The school serves an area of rural Somerset. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above average; many of these are older pupils who have transferred to the school as a result of parental requests. There are two pupils with statements of special educational needs. All pupils are of white, European ethnic origin. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, though has increased recently. Most pupils come from the village and surrounding area, though an increasing number of parents are seeking admission to the school and are prepared to travel some distance daily to enable their child to attend. Pupils' attainment on entry to the Reception age group is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. It is a thriving and successful village primary school that is well respected by parents and the local community. The headteacher provides very positive, supportive leadership, sets clear educational direction for the school and leads very much by example, as she has a considerable teaching commitment. The effective and highly supportive governing body ensure that available resources are used to provide the best possible quality of education. As a result of good and some very good teaching, pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching, which is good overall and very good in one third of lessons, so that many pupils achieve well.
- Provides highly effective support for those pupils with special educational needs, especially those with learning and physical difficulties. As a result, these pupils often make very good progress.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards school. They work very hard, take great pride in their achievements and enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is very good.
- Relationships at all levels are excellent. There is a strong commitment to the school by everyone, including the teaching, learning support, caretaking, supervisory and administrative staff.

What could be improved

- Further refinements in the way that pupils' progress is tracked; pupils are not sufficiently involved in self assessment and they lack knowledge of their own learning.
- The level of work expected of the higher attaining pupils, because they are not always challenged sufficiently.

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 November 1997 and improvement overall is very good. Standards and provision for information and communication technology (ICT) are much improved. Standards attained are now in line with expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven, although the school acknowledges the need to develop even further the use of cross curricular links in ICT. The school development plan is now a useful tool for school improvement. Formal observation and monitoring of teaching and progress is undertaken regularly. Curriculum planning is now very good indeed. Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are very detailed and used extremely effectively to support those pupils with identified special educational needs. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents meets statutory requirements.

STANDARDS

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

	compared with				
Performance in:	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	С	Е	Е	D	
mathematics	С	С	D	D	
science	D	С	С	С	

Key	
well above average	Α
above average	В
average	С
below average	D
well below average	Е

With such small cohorts of pupils (only eleven in 2002), comparative data is not helpful. (NB: If the school's cohort size is ten or less, its results do not have to be published.) Pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. Reading skills are generally better than writing. In science, pupils are developing a good understanding of the skills of scientific investigation and enquiry, especially at Key Stage 2. Standards in art are good, as they were in the previous inspection. Standards in other subjects have been maintained or improved. This is a compliment to the school and the quality of teaching, as the school now has a much greater proportion of pupils who have difficulties with their learning. Targets set for 2003 are appropriately challenging though some higher attaining pupils may well be able to exceed the targets set for them. Pupils with special educational needs, especially those with learning difficulties, make good and often very good progress and achieve well, as a result of good teaching. Higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as much as they should.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are enthusiastic learners. They work hard and are interested in the activities provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well indeed in class and around the school. They show great respect for property and their environment.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent and parents value the family atmosphere where older pupils support and help the younger ones.
Attendance	Attendance is good and there are very few unauthorised absences. Pupils love coming to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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.

Teaching is good overall with one third very good. Lesson planning is detailed and comprehensive. Planning for the needs of pupils of differing ages and abilities is often good, although teachers do not always plan sufficiently challenging activities to extend the higher attainers. Literacy and numeracy are well taught. Pupils are very well managed and teachers have high expectations of good behaviour

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; the curriculum is broad and well balanced. Especially good is the enrichment of the curriculum through visits and visitors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; this is a strength of the school. Pupils make good, and sometimes very good progress. They are very well supported by teachers and learning support staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils to whom this applies.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good; provision for spiritual, moral and social development is a strength of the school. Cultural development is good although more could be done to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good; there is a high level of care and concern for those pupils with disabilities.

The curriculum is fully inclusive and pupils are provided with full access to the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs regularly achieve their targets because of the very good planning by teachers and the very effective support of the learning support assistants. This is a particularly significant improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and manage- ment by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good; the headteacher provides very positive, supportive leadership and leads strongly by example. All staff are deeply committed to the work of the school and there is a strong sense of teamwork.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; governors are effective and highly supportive; they are also deeply committed to the work of the school and securing improvements in provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; there is now a regular programme of lesson observation, evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress.
The strategic use of resources	Very good; the high number of learning support staff employed have a very positive impact on standards and pupils' progress.

The school applies well the principles of best value. The accommodation is very well used to support the curriculum and caretaking staff make a great effort to maintain high standards of cleanliness.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved	
 Their children like school. Children make good progress. Behaviour is good. The staff are approachable. The school is well led and managed. Children have positive attitudes towards school. 	 More detailed information to parents, especially about progress. More extra-curricular activities. 	

The inspectors agree with parents' and carers' positive views. The range of extra-curricular activities is good, especially for seven to eleven year olds, taking into consideration the small number of teachers. Pupils' reports are detailed and meet statutory requirements, but not all contain enough information about how pupils could improve their work. Parents consider that staff are approachable, but the school should work more closely with parents by offering a mid-year consultation so that parents can be made more aware of their child's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The quality of teaching, which is good overall and very good in about one third of lessons, so that many pupils achieve well.

- 1. Teaching is good or very good in almost all lessons, with about one third of the teaching being very good. Very good teaching is evident across a range of age groups and subjects. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is often very good. As a result of much good teaching and individual help, pupils' reading skills are very well developed and the majority read well. Pupils are confident when dealing with numbers, and do so at an appropriate level. They are taught to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, for example when handling data in information and communication technology (ICT), or when working with co-ordinates in geography. In science, pupils are carefully taught the skills of scientific investigation and enquiry, essential to their development as young scientists.
- 2. Teachers plan lessons well and usually, though not always, share the lesson's objectives with the pupils. Teachers have high expectations of the way in which pupils should behave, to which pupils' respond well. Relationships between teachers and pupils and pupils and their peers are excellent; these are strengths of the school. Lessons are made interesting and they are well resourced. Pupils are taught to handle resources carefully and treat them with great respect.
- 3. Teachers often probe pupils' understanding through highly skilled questioning, for example 'Can you explain to me why you think that?' or 'Can you tell us why you have that opinion?'. Pupils' responses, opinions and explanations are always highly valued by the teacher, so that they learn and progress with increasing confidence. Pupils listen carefully to their teacher and to each other; most speak well. Standards of speaking and listening are good.
- 4. Teachers have to plan an extensive range of activities and tasks to match the needs of the wide range of ages and abilities in each class. They are especially successful in planning well differentiated activities for the lower and average attainers, though the extension tasks planned do not always really challenge and extend the thinking of the higher attainers. Teachers are confident of their ability to teach the national numeracy and literacy strategies, but do so in a flexible way, guided by the needs of the pupils.
- 5. All pupils, including the youngest pupils in the reception group, are skilfully taught to be independent and self-organising. This makes a significant contribution to their personal and social development, as well as to their academic achievements. They become confident, mature and settle into school routines very easily.
- 6. Teachers communicate well with the learning support staff, who are well briefed and play a key role in ensuring good quality provision for both individuals and small groups. They are actively encouraged to be involved in pupils' learning, to use their initiative and as such make a major and much valued contribution to the life of the school.

Provides highly effective support for those pupils with special educational needs, especially those with learning and physical difficulties. As a result, these pupils often make very good progress.

- 7. There are twelve pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, including two pupils with statements. This is a high proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register in the context of a small school, but the school does a first class job in supporting and teaching them, so that these pupils make good and often very good progress towards their personal targets.
- 8. Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are very well written with clear and achievable targets. The headteacher, who is also the co-ordinator for special educational needs, ensures that all teaching and support staff are aware of the content and that planned activities and tasks are well matched to individual needs. Support staff, as well as teaching staff, are closely involved in assessing and noting each pupil's progress, however small may be each new step in learning. As a result, pupils make very good progress towards their individual targets. Specific equipment and resources are obtained so that pupils have the benefit of following the full curriculum. The school's inclusive philosophy and policy is implemented and manifested in practice. The wider community, as well as the school, has benefited from welcoming pupils with a wide range of learning, behavioural and physical difficulties. The wider community has been privileged to see 'inclusion in action' at the school.
- 9. Parents and carers are involved regularly in discussion about their child's progress, in addition to the statutory annual review. Learning support staff make a very significant contribution to the pupils' progress, and they are regularly invited to make contributions to assessment and review meetings. Parents, teachers and support staff work very closely, to the great benefit of the pupils.

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards school. They work very hard, take great pride in their achievements and enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is very good.

- 10. In all lessons observed, pupils worked hard and diligently, often with very good concentration. These very positive attitudes to learning mean that they make the most of all the opportunities which the school has to offer. They consistently give of their best, and as a result, most pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- 11. Pupils enjoy talking about their work and they enjoy coming to school. Most have very mature, positive attitudes, are tolerant of each other and highly respectful of the feelings of others. The pupils' good listening and speaking skills are developed well, through the school's clear expectations that pupils should listen to one another as well as to adults. Pupils have a very great respect for their environment and treat resources and equipment with great care.
- 12. The school's very positive ethos is highly supportive of the pupils' spiritual, social and moral development. There are many strategies which the school uses to support pupils' spiritual development, especially in assemblies but also in lessons; for example, when during an English lesson, pupils in Year 5 and 6 were amazed and intrigued by the links between water and disease, as referred to in the text they were studying. In assemblies, pupils quietly reflect on suggestions put to them by their teacher or other pupils. They say grace at the end of their midday meal, reflecting and being thankful for the food that they have eaten. Older and younger pupils mix well both in the playground and the classroom; pupils are actively encouraged to co-operate and collaborate in a wide variety of groupings. Pupils new to the school are made to feel most welcome. Visits and visitors to the school mean that pupils have to acquire a sophisticated range of social skills. Pupils are taught carefully right from

wrong, and taught to listen to the views of and opinions of others, even though they may not agree with the other person's views. This all supports the pupils' moral development. Art, music and literature support the pupils' cultural development well.

- 13. These facets of the school's very good provision help the pupils to become mature, thoughtful individuals, with very positive attitudes towards school and towards others.
- 14. Behaviour in the classrooms and the playground is very good. Parents spoke appreciatively of the way in which the school deals with any issues of bullying or intimidation. Pupils understand and are clear about the school's expectations of good behaviour. These high standards and expectations mean that only rarely is time wasted in lessons because teachers have to deal with misbehaviour; when a pupil does misbehave, the situation is dealt with calmly and effectively.

Relationships at all levels are excellent. There is a strong commitment to the school by everyone, including the teaching, learning support, caretaking, supervisory and administrative staff.

- 15. All members of the school community have an exceptional commitment to the school and its community. There is a very strong sense of teamwork. Staff are always prepared to 'go that extra mile' on behalf of the school and its pupils. The headteacher leads strongly by example; she enjoys excellent relationships with everyone, and teaches the Key Stage 1 class of four, five, six and seven year olds for three days a week.
- 16. Teaching and learning support staff work very well together to the clear benefit of the pupils. Administrative, supervisory and caretaking staff contribute enormously to the smooth running and organisation of the school. They feel appreciated and valued for their contributions.
- 17. All of the adults provide exemplary 'role models' for the pupils; all the pupils are known individually by all staff and this fosters the pupils' sense of security, well-being and their strong feeling that they are valued by everyone.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Further refinements in the way that pupils' progress is tracked; pupils are not sufficiently involved in self-assessment and they lack knowledge of their own learning.

- 18. Although pupils are tested regularly, this information is not used sufficiently to explain to pupils what they must do to improve. There are too few opportunities for pupils to self assess a draft, or a piece of their own completed work for example, a narrative or an account as part of their English writing. Pupils have too few opportunities to read and constructively criticise each other's work, as 'critical response partners' or 'editors'. In mathematics, pupils are not encouraged to show their working, nor to discuss their methods and ways of working with the teacher.
- 19. In plenary sessions at the end of the literacy hour, pupils are often invited to discuss what they have done, but not enough attention is given to discussion of the reasons why objectives or targets have not been achieved and, most importantly, the reasons why the pupils judge that they have not managed to achieve them.
- 20. When pupils' written work is marked, it is not annotated against their targets, so pupils do not know what they need to work on and improve.

21. Individual targets are set, but only occasionally do individual pupils know what they are, because targets are not recorded by or kept by the pupils themselves. Consequently, pupils do not have a good knowledge of their own learning. Parents are not always sufficiently informed about their child's personal targets and areas for improvement.

The level of work expected of the higher attaining pupils, because they are not always challenged sufficiently.

- 22. Although teachers take care to set extension activities for pupils who are likely to complete tasks quickly, only occasionally do lesson plans state challenging additional or even separate activities for the potential higher attainers.
- 23. Higher ability pupils are taught the skills of skimming and scanning when reading for information, but are not regularly asked to use these skills to undertake some research and present it to their peers.
- 24. The marking of pupils' work is not rigorous enough for the needs of the higher attainers. For example, there is too little diagnostic marking which tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work and is then rigorously followed up, first through the pupil self checking and then by the teacher's marking. Pupils need to be absolutely clear what are the criteria for marking a particular piece of work. For example, if the lesson's objectives are associated with correct spelling, or with the use of paragraphs, pupils need to know about the teacher's expectations. These are currently not always communicated clearly to pupils, nor are the teacher's different expectations of the higher attainers communicated adequately to them.
- 25. Pupils in Year 2 are not taught to join their letters in order to acquire a cursive, legible handwriting style. Many of these pupils have a sufficient level of control and co-ordination to be able to achieve well in handwriting. Older pupils do not begin to use a pen until their final term in Year 6, which barely prepares them adequately for secondary school. Many of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 have sufficient co-ordination and control to begin to use pen at an earlier stage.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

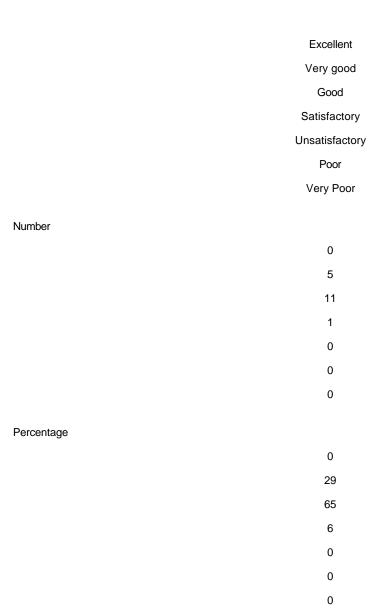
- 26. So as to improve even further standards attained and the progress pupils make, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
 - (1) Revise and refine the way that pupils' progress is tracked, by providing more opportunities for pupils to be involved in self-assessment and have a better knowledge of their own learning by:
 - designing procedures that offer pupils opportunities to check and self assess their work, and achievements, when relevant;
 - sharing personal targets with individual pupils and their parents;
 - checking regularly with pupils how close they are to achieving these targets:
 - when appropriate, asking pupils to show their working and explain their methods:
 - teaching pupils the skills of self assessment, so that when appropriate they can be involved in checking their work against their targets, before the teacher marks the work with them.
 - (2) Improve the level of challenge for the higher attaining pupils by:
 - ensuring that appropriately challenging tasks are planned;
 - devising and implementing a school policy for higher attaining pupils;
 - revising the school's handwriting policy so that a joined, legible style is taught earlier and by providing pupils with the opportunity to use a pen, when appropriate;
 - providing further opportunities for pupils to use their research skills to greater purpose;
 - ensuring that marking is sufficiently rigorous and, when necessary, check that pupils' work has improved as suggested.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection



The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken in interpreting the percentages as each lesson carries such a high 'weighting'.

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)	-	66
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs		YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	2
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	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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	4	4	8

National Curriculum T	est/Task Results	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Boys	4	4	4
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	3	3	4
	Total	7	7	8
Percentage of pupils	School	88 (100)	88 (100)	100 (100)
at NC level 2 or above	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Asso	chers' Assessments English		Mathematics	Science
	Boys	4	4	4
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	7	7	7
Percentage of pupils	School	88 (78)	88 (89)	88 (89)
at NC level 2 or above	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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	2	9	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	0	1	2
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	7	6	9
	Total	7	7	11
Percentage of pupils	School	64 (67)	64 (78)	100 (89)
at NC level 4 or above	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Asso	essments	English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	0	0	0
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	6	6	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (78)	55 (78)	55 (78)
	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
White – British	0
White – Irish	0
White – any other White background	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0
Black or Black British – African	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0
Chinese	0
Any other ethnic group	0
No ethnic group recorded	0

No of pupils on roll
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	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

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.4
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	-
Total aggregate hours worked per week	-

Nur	nber of pupils per FTE adult	-
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02

	£
Total income	208123
Total expenditure	183601
Expenditure per pupil	2623
Balance brought forward from previous year	30221
Balance carried forward to next year	54743

Finance data yet to be inserted

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.4

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	63
Number of questionnaires returned	42

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	2	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	43	52	0	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	60	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	51	15	2	0
The teaching is good.	50	36	2	0	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	36	29	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	21	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	38	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	24	49	24	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	60	38	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	48	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	38	19	7	12