

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **VALLEY END CE INFANT SCHOOL**

Chobham, Surrey

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125140

Headteacher: Mrs S Jane

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Punnett  
17826

Dates of inspection: 6 – 8 March 2000

Inspection number: 187214

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Highams Lane Valley End Chobham Surrey
Postcode:	GU24 8TB
Telephone number:	01276 858299
Fax number:	01276 858299
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Whittington
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
June Punnett	Registered inspector
Ann Bennett	Lay inspector
Sandra Teacher	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Open Book Inspections  
6 East Point  
High Street, Seal  
Sevenoaks, Kent  
TN15 OEG

Tel No 01732 - 761010

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Valley End is a Church of England infant school for pupils from four to seven years old. Although situated in the Chobham ward in Surrey, it serves a much wider area, with a few pupils travelling from Guildford to attend the school. The majority of pupils come from homes with very favourable socio-economic circumstances. The accommodation is a mixture of 1859 buildings and more recent ones built in the last few years. There are 186 pupils on roll, 36 of whom are part time. They are organised into six single-age classes. The school is smaller than the average size for other primary schools and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is low. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average, although the percentage of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is broadly in line with the national average. On entry to the school children's attainment is above average.

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

This is a good school with many very good or excellent features. The pupils achieve high standards in most aspects of their education. The school has identified information technology as an area for further development. The school is very well led and managed and there is a good sense of teamwork amongst the staff. The quality of teaching is very good overall, with many examples of very good and excellent teaching. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. This is a very effective school that is very well placed to further build upon its successes. The school continues to give good value for money.

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

- Attainment in reading, writing, speaking and listening and music is very high.
- Overall, teaching is very good, with over a half of lessons observed being very good or excellent.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- The pupils enjoy school, are eager to learn, work hard and behave very well.

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

- The identification of information technology in teachers' weekly lesson plans and the development of the subject throughout the curriculum and through the use of the Internet.
- Written records of the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher.

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

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

Valley End was last inspected four years ago. Since then it has gained a Charter Mark for excellence following the very good inspection report. The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified by the previous report. The strengths identified in the previous report have been maintained in the school's caring Christian ethos and pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour. The quality of provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, remains a significant strength of the school. The quality of leadership and management remains very high. Standards have risen in reading, writing and science. The school has improved the

provision of information technology through the purchase of new hardware and has recently appointed a new co-ordinator for the subject, but the development of the subject is at the early stages. The previously high standards in music have been maintained. The high quality provision in the early years class has been maintained. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection and high quality teaching remains a strength of the school and is a significant factor in the school's outstanding results. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good, and the school is very well placed to develop its work further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	A*	A*	A*	A*
Writing	A*	A*	A*	A*
Mathematics	A	A*	A	A

Key	
Very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
well below average	E

Almost all of the five-year-olds in the current reception classes achieve beyond what is normally expected for their age in language and literacy and numeracy. At seven years of age, standards are very high in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics and science. Another significant strength is music. The work pupils were doing during the inspection confirmed these standards. In reading and writing the trends over time show the school to be consistently achieving results that are in the highest five per cent of schools nationally. The school has set even higher targets for the next two years; these are challenging yet realistic for further improvement.

The high standards of work indicated in the tests and assessments were reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Pupils who learn more quickly than others reached very high standards in speaking and listening, writing, reading, science and music. Very high standards of music, speaking and listening and drama were evident in video recordings of the Christmas production and the Leavers' Assembly. Pupils are making good progress in information technology, although with further planned opportunities they could do even better.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent attitudes to school. Pupils are keen to come to school and enthusiastic about learning. They enjoy lessons and work very hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good both in and outside of lessons. No evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships throughout the school. Pupils co-operate well, they are helpful, thoughtful and caring about each other.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance figures are above average.

The enthusiasm of pupils and their excellent attitudes to work contribute greatly to the happy working atmosphere within the school. Pupils' very good behaviour shows their clear understanding of the school's code of conduct. Very good attendance ensures that pupils' learning is not disrupted through absence.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Not applicable

*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 was very good or better in 62 per cent of lessons, good or better in 86 per cent, and satisfactory in the remainder. In the reception classes the quality of teaching was never less than very good. The youngest children in the reception year receive an excellent start to their education due to the in-depth knowledge of the foundation stage demonstrated by teachers and their staff, resulting in the very good provision made for these children. The teaching of reading, writing and science is very good throughout Key Stage 1 (five to seven year olds). The teaching of mathematics is good. Lessons across the school are interesting, varied and challenging to pupils of all abilities. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in their learning. Pupils who learn more quickly than others are given suitably challenging tasks that ensure their learning moves forward at a good pace. Extension classes are provided for them in English and science and these are having a positive impact on standards of work. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. The teaching of information technology is satisfactory although it is not yet evident in all teachers' planning.

The learning of children aged under five is very good. They are quickly learning the skills of reading and writing and they exceed expectations in all areas of learning by the time they are five years old. The learning of pupils aged five to seven is good overall. Where the learning is very good, teachers have high expectations and make these clear to the pupils. Invariably they also have subject expertise and knowledge and move the lessons along at a brisk pace. Learning in all lessons is enhanced by the contribution of classroom assistants and committed parents and governors.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum has good breadth and balance and meets all statutory requirements. The planned curriculum for the early years is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs with very good procedures in place for early identification of needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Although a few pupils are identified as being bilingual they are competent English users.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Excellent overall. Spiritual development is a significant strength. There are close links with the Church and very good opportunities for spiritual development through literature and music. The opportunities for pupils' personal development and initiative are excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. The school has very good procedures in place to assess pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. The integration of pupils with special educational needs is excellent.

The curriculum for the early years takes full account of the desirable learning outcomes for children aged under five. The needs of all pupils are consistently met. The range of extra-curricular activities enable pupils to experience creative and practical activities which enhance curricular opportunities well at Key Stage 1.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy head, gives very good leadership to the school. The very positive ethos created by the headteacher and staff ensures that Valley End is a place for learning. The headteacher gives clear educational direction to the school and sets very high standards for staff and pupils to achieve. Teachers with curriculum responsibilities make a significant contribution to the school's success.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The new governing body has a very good grasp of their responsibilities. The finance committee has very recently adopted the principles of best value; these now await ratification from the governing body. Finances are managed very efficiently with some savings from school funds clearly identified for the building of the new information technology room. Governors share the headteacher's vision for the school and give very good support to the headteacher and her staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring of the school's performance is very good and appropriately involves all key personnel. Realistic targets have been set for further improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of all staff, of time, of curriculum resources and of the building. The very new resources for information technology in classrooms are not yet fully utilised.

The senior management team is effective in managing the staff and curriculum very well.

The school's ethos is very strong and its aims are well promoted through its work. The strength of the school's leadership and management is reflected in its consistently outstanding results.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All parents agree that the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations that pupils will work hard and achieve well.</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• Children make good progress in school.</li> <li>• The staff are outstanding.</li> <li>• Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small minority of parents is concerned about the amount of homework that children are given.</li> <li>• A very small minority of parents is concerned about the balance within the curriculum, with reference to those children who are withdrawn from lessons for extra English and science teaching.</li> <li>• A very small minority expressed their concern at the school's emphasis on fund raising.</li> <li>• Not all parents feel well informed about their child's progress.</li> </ul>

The inspectors fully endorse the positive views expressed by parents. Having carefully considered the issue of homework the inspection team's judgement is that in general the amount of homework expected by the school is not unreasonable. However, parents would benefit from having a clearer statement of guidance on how to approach homework and written information about the school's approach when, for whatever reason, it is not completed. There was no evidence to suggest that the pupils who learn more quickly than others are disadvantaged by the extension groups in English and science. The focus on fund raising is high in a small school and, unless extra funding is forthcoming for new buildings and computer technology, it will remain so for the foreseeable future. This is an acceptable situation in the circumstances. The inspection found the school gave sufficient opportunities for parents to talk to staff about their child's progress but more written information about the intended class topics would be an improvement.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Attainment in reading, writing, speaking and listening and music is very high.**

1. Results since the last inspection have placed the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally. In reading and writing the results are very high in relation to similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading in 1999 was more than double the national average, whilst in writing more than three times the number of pupils reached that standard compared to the national average. Trends in reading and writing over the past three years show consistently very high attainment. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained in all areas and improved in reading, writing and science.

2. In speaking and listening, pupils build on the skills acquired in the early years class where the development of language has a very high priority. Six-year-olds use scientific language competently, such as opaque, reflective and rigid to describe the properties of materials. They understand staccato in music and use the word to describe a very crisp note. The majority of children begin school with a well-developed vocabulary and are well able to articulate their needs. However, a small minority begin by experiencing difficulties in their phonological awareness and it is to the credit of the early years staff that children progress as well as they do with speaking and listening. In reading, the youngest children make very good progress and show their enjoyment of books. At Key Stage 1, teachers build on pupils' early learning experience so that pupils continue to make very good progress with their learning throughout the key stage.

3. The standards attained in music are very high and surpass many achieved in other primary schools. The quality of performance both in lessons and in school productions such as the Christmas concert and Leavers' Assembly, both seen on video, is outstanding. While the scope of the inspection was limited during the short inspection, very good work was seen in science, mathematics and art. Standards in mathematics are well above the national average and the work seen during the inspection suggests that this will be maintained in this year's test. Pupils show an enthusiasm for mental activities and during the inspection their mental agility was noticeably more developed than their written work. Numeracy skills are well used to support pupils' learning in science and contribute to the well above average standards in mathematics. Standards in information technology are in line with the national expectations but could be better when further regular planned opportunities are made available to pupils to learn new skills.

#### **Overall, teaching is very good, with more than a half of lessons observed being very good or excellent.**

4. The teaching of children aged under five is never less than very good. The planning for the youngest children is excellent, clearly building on previous learning. For example, in an earlier lesson children had designed and made a vehicle; the task was now to record their model in a picture and add their own text. "My mummy in a blue car" was a written contribution from a four-year-old. Early reading is supported by comprehensive home/school contact books that are well used by parents and staff. Three quarters of children have 'taken off' with their reading and this reflects the successful focused work by staff and parents. Comprehensive records are maintained for every area of the child's development and this information is the source for planning by staff. Parents and governors give invaluable support to the classes and are given very clear guidance about

how to support the learning activities. This gives the best opportunities for children to make good progress and achieve the learning outcomes. Planning is clearly based upon the desirable learning outcomes for young children. Children progress to the National Curriculum when they are ready. The early years teaching is a significant factor in the school's success as it builds the foundation for Key Stage 1 and almost all children exceed the expectations for their age by the time they are five.

5. The teaching of pupils aged five to seven ranges from excellent to satisfactory. Expectations are high in all lessons and teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, except information technology. Some are a little unsure of information technology strategies but this is due to the new technologies very recently arrived in the school. Teachers' lesson plans make reference to learning objectives and outcomes in all subjects except information technology. Information technology is not yet coming through the curriculum and the school is aware that this is an area for further development. Teachers modify their teaching to take account of the differing needs of individual pupils, which results in pupils who learn more quickly than others and those who take longer receiving appropriate learning opportunities. Resources are well used; for example, in a Year 2 science lesson, when exploring the properties of materials, wellington boots, balloons, mirrors and plastic beakers were used as resources. In mathematics, a lively approach to a mental agility session enabled pupils not only to develop their agility with numbers but maintained their interest in the activity. Numeracy is well taught across the key stage. In good literacy lessons, learning objectives are shared with the pupils. In a Year 2 lesson on homonyms, the teacher encouraged pupils to 'have a go' and to learn from each other. Following this encouragement, the pupils readily chose hair/hare, pear/pair as examples. Literacy is very well taught across the key stage. In successful lessons, teaching is delivered at an excellent pace, encouraging pupils to concentrate and work hard. Where the teaching is satisfactory, there was insufficient challenge for the higher-attaining pupils and lost opportunities, for example, for independent writing. Planning tended to be brief, resulting in too difficult tasks that inhibited learning. Excellent teaching was seen in music where high expectations and subject expertise contributed to the very high standards achieved by the pupils.

### **The school is very well led and managed**

6. The aims of the school are reflected in its everyday life and they make a strong contribution to high standards. The school has a very clear sense of educational direction and this is understood by the whole school community. The headteacher receives very good support from the deputy head, staff and governors and this strongly contributes to the school's success. The headteacher sets very high standards for staff and pupils which are well met. The strength of the school's leadership has been maintained since the last inspection and it is the quality of the headteacher's leadership that drives the standards forward. The staff are hardworking and committed to the school. Staff are well managed by the headteacher and close teamwork contributes to a harmonious atmosphere and the high standards achieved in all areas of school life. There are shared Christian values that are reflected in the school's work and permeate its very positive Christian ethos. The staff with curriculum responsibilities monitor their curriculum areas and the headteacher monitors and analyses the national test results. The headteacher monitors the effectiveness of teaching but there is no formal written record to reflect her work. Targets are set annually for individual pupils and these help to drive standards forward.

7. The governing body is effective and fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Governors are fully involved in the work and life of the school and thus contribute significantly to the school's ethos and success. The relationship between the governing body and the school is very good. The budget is well managed and planned to support the priorities in the school development plan. The school has started saving school funds towards the building of the new information technology room. Funds allocated for staff training and for pupils with special educational needs are well spent. The high expenditure on classroom assistants is well spent, as their work contributes significantly to the high standards. The recommendations of the most recent audit report have been fully implemented. This is a very effective governing body. The school office is welcoming and provides a very good first reference point for the school. The accommodation is bright, spacious and welcoming and a credit to the caretaker. Resources for learning are good although there is an opportunity to further expand those for religious education, especially those of other faiths and use of information technology resources.

8. The vast majority of parents support the school's approach to homework although a small minority of parents is not happy with the amount expected. Some parents would welcome written guidance from the school about homework. There are close links with parents who give the school tremendous support in fund raising. They also give their time to work in classrooms, and this is very well managed by teachers. Parents' contributions of time and effort are valued by the school.

**The pupils enjoy school, are eager to learn, work hard and behave very well.**

9. This area is a maintained strength since the last inspection as pupils continue to have very positive attitudes towards school and what it offers. Pupils throughout the school understand the purpose of schooling, they concentrate well in lessons and work very hard. Although the youngest children are part-time until the end of the Spring term, they have settled quickly into school routines and understand what is expected of them. Pupils use resources carefully in lessons and show a pride in their school and in their work. Pupils' behaviour is very good both in lessons and around the school. They show mature, appropriate behaviour in Church. Pupils are polite, helpful and caring. An example of the caring attitudes seen during the inspection was during a whole school music lesson when a very young pupil gently tried to persuade another with special needs to sit properly during the lesson. An arm went round the shoulders and although unsuccessful, it illustrated the caring attitudes of pupils at Valley End. Relationships are excellent and very good opportunities exist through assemblies and lessons for pupils' personal development. No evidence was noted of bullying but should this occur the school has effective procedures to deal with any incidents.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The identification of information technology in teachers' weekly plans and the development of the subject throughout the curriculum and through the use of the Internet**

10. Although the standards in information technology are in line with national expectations they are not as high as they could be. In some classes information technology is clearly identified in teachers' plans, in the majority it is not. This restricts the opportunities for pupils to gain and develop their skills and to assist them in their learning. There are very few examples of information technology supporting other subjects. Where it is used, such as in the reception classes for developing mathematics and language skills, it supports learning well. The school has very recently acquired new machines and staff and helpers are still 'finding their feet' with the new technology. Some staff and helpers lack confidence in using the new technology and the co-ordinator has appropriately arranged in-service training for later this year.

11. The school has identified information technology as an area for further development, to build on the improvements already in place, and it is appropriate that the new co-ordinator has written such a detailed and comprehensive action plan. The headteacher and governing body aim to raise sufficient funds to establish an information technology suite.

### **Written records of the headteacher's monitoring of teaching**

12. Effective monitoring takes place of all that happens at Valley End. However, there are no formal written records by the headteacher of her monitoring of teaching. Whilst this occurs informally there are occasions when a recommendation to a teacher may need to be followed through to improve practice further. Written records would ensure that recommendations are followed when next monitored and the system would allow action to continue during the head's absence.

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

13. The school has identified points for improvement in its own planning and, in order to maintain and build on the standards achieved, the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards in the knowledge and use of information technology by:
  - ensuring that it is clearly identified in teachers' weekly lesson plans;
  - using the technology to support learning in all curriculum areas where appropriate;
  - developing the skills of teachers, assistants and volunteers in using computers with groups of pupils and individuals;
  - monitoring the effects of information technology on specific aspects of learning, such as for those pupils who learn more quickly and those who take longer.(Paragraphs 3, 5, 7, 10, 11)
  
- (2) Formalise the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher to further aid staff development and maintain the high standards of teaching. (Paragraphs 6, 14)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
24	38	24	14	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	na	168
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	na	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	na	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	na	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	27	25	52

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	26
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	51	51	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (94)	98 (94)	98 (96)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	26
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	51	51	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (94)	98 (96)	98 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85]	87 (86)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	120
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24:1
Average class size	30:1

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/9
	£
Total income	269,281
Total expenditure	300,061
Expenditure per pupil	1,849
Balance brought forward from previous year	50,139
Balance carried forward to next year	52,558

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	186
Number of questionnaires returned	107

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	26	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	31	1	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	76	23	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	40	8	0	1
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	46	8	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	43	6	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	20	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	57	37	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	28	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	27	1	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	50	4	1	10

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

Ten out of the 36 parents who attended the parents' meeting expressed their concern about the amount of homework expected to be completed by young children.