

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OX CLOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Spennymoor

LEA area: Co. Durham

Unique reference number: 114091

Headteacher: Mrs J Frost

Reporting inspector: Mr B Tyrer  
23101

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 189771

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ox Close Crescent Spennymoor Co. Durham
Postcode:	DL16 6RU
Telephone number:	01388 814860
Fax number:	01388 810757
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Moore
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr A Smith	Lay inspector
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# REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>10</b>
Attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above average at the end of both key stages.	
Teaching is good – a particular strength of which is the fact that relationships with pupils are excellent.	
The leadership of the headteacher is excellent – she has worked most effectively with all staff and governors to secure significant improvements and to maintain those already high standards.	
The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils is excellent – in response to the good teaching they are offered they show themselves to be keen, enthusiastic and involved in their own learning.	
Provision for SEN – currently with the headteacher as special educational needs coordinator – is very good.	
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>14</b>
Elements of the teaching of information and communications technology. The monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of the work in pupils' books.	
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>15</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in the Spennymoor ward and has 239 pupils on roll of whom 106 are boys and 133 are girls. This is an average size for a primary school. Twenty-two pupils are identified as being eligible for free school meals and this percentage is below the national average. The school has 37 pupils on the school's register for pupils with special educational needs and this is below the national average. Five pupils have statements of special educational needs and this percentage is in line with the national average. The school population is almost entirely white and no pupils have English as a second language. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above what might be expected nationally.

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

This is a very effective school. High standards are achieved in national tests in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 achieve similarly in reading writing and mathematics. Teaching is good overall and the leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the school contribute significantly to the high standards and when taking the schools low costs into consideration it is judged that the school is providing very good value for money.

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

- Attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above average at the end of both key stages.
- Teaching is good – a particular strength of which is the fact that relationships with pupils are excellent.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent – she has worked most effectively with all staff and governors to secure significant improvements and to maintain those already high standards.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils is excellent – in response to the good teaching they are offered they show themselves to be keen, enthusiastic and involved in their own learning.
- Provision for SEN – currently with the headteacher as special educational needs coordinator - is very good.

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

- Elements of the teaching of information and communications technology.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of the work in pupils' books.

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

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

The school has made a very good improvement since the time of the last inspection. The school has responded very effectively to the key issue from the previous inspection report which was essentially concerned with improving aspects of long medium and short term planning. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been improved and the school is in a strong position to meet the targets for English and mathematics that it has set. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and the provision for pupils with special educational needs has now become very good. The management structure that is currently in place enables the school to function very effectively. The governing body, which has gone

through some changes in personnel, is now in a position to improve the already effective support it provides for the headteacher and senior management team by developing into an increasingly proactive group.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	B	A	B
mathematics	B	E	A	A
science	A	E	A	A

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

Standards achieved in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in English mathematics and science are well above average and are also impressive when compared with similar schools. Attainment over time showed a dip in performance in 1998, particularly in mathematics and science, but this has since been rectified and inspection shows that current standards reflect those seen in the 1999 tests. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics shows very high levels (within the top 5 per cent) of achievement when compared with national averages and with similar schools. Inspection confirms similar standards at Key Stage 1. Because of the school's very good assessment procedures they are able to predict pupil performance and set targets with a high degree of accuracy and this they have done.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent- pupils of all ages are highly motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent - pupils respond very well to direction and also exercise high levels of self discipline as well.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent - a strength of the school is the extremely high quality relationships that exist at all levels within the school.
Attendance	Is Good and is above the national average – some parents insist on exercising their right to take their children away on holiday during school time.

Clearly this aspect is a major strength of the school and is one that illustrates the effective partnership between home and school. The school makes high quality provision for pupils

and parents who, in return, appreciate what is offered and respond very positively.

## 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 was good overall. It was satisfactory in 9 per cent of lessons, good in 73 per cent of lessons and very good in 18 per cent. This constitutes a significant improvement since the last inspection report when 10 per cent of teaching was found to be unsatisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and these skills are put to good use in support of other areas of the curriculum. Teachers show very high levels of commitment and have high expectations of their pupils in terms of application and behaviour. The teachers reveal their high expectations through their planning and teaching which make provision for pupils of all abilities. The provision and support given to pupils with special educational needs is very good and is, again, a significant improvement since the last inspection. Relationships are excellent. Teachers' audits show that they have a need to extend their skills in information and communications technology and scrutiny of work shows that greater emphasis needs to be given to some aspects of the subject such as monitoring. The school has already recognised this, has begun to provide some training through New opportunities funding and further action to address this issue is outlined in the school development plan. Pupils' learning was good. In response to the good teaching they received they made good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school is offering a good curriculum which is available to pupils of all levels of attainment. Aspects of information and communications technology need to be strengthened.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good – planning and teaching show that provision is carefully linked to the pupil's individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good – in all aspects. The school should consider ways of extending this provision by developing even better experiences of other faiths and religions through first hand experiences such as visits to non Christian places of worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good – provision for child protection and health and safety issues are well established.

The provision for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is particularly good and this impacts favourably on other areas of the curriculum. The element of monitoring in the information technology curriculum is under emphasised. The school looks after its pupils well. The pupils feel safe and have confidence in all those who support them. The school has very good links with parents.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent – in the short time since her appointment the headteacher has been the driving force behind much of the improvement that the school has made. She has coped effectively with initial difficulties due to absence at senior management level and has now created a senior management team, and corporate spirit in all staff, that is enabling the school to move successfully forward.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are now in a position to become increasingly proactive. They are meeting their statutory responsibilities well and are providing good levels of support to the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent in some respects and very good overall. The school has a need to monitor and evaluate the quality of work in pupils' books.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent – the school has very clear and well founded plans and the budget is set in such a way as to support the achievement of the plan's objectives.

As outlined above, the leadership and management of the school and in particular the part played by the headteacher are great strengths of this successful school. The school is assured of providing best value by its adherence to the county's purchasing schedule and practices which are based on best value principles.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that their children like school.</li> <li>• that behaviour is good.</li> <li>• that school expects their children to work hard.</li> <li>• that their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• that the school is approachable.</li> <li>• that the teaching is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the range of activities that the school provides.</li> <li>• the discontinuity caused to some classes as a result of long term staff absence due to ill health.</li> </ul>

The inspection team would agree with and endorse what the parents like most about the school but feel that the school is currently providing a good curriculum within which is to be found good extra curricular opportunity. The inspection team concurs with parents in their anxiety over staff absence and its inhibiting effect on progress and standards but notes that the problems now appear to have been resolved.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above average at the end of both key stages**

1. The school has made good improvements over time since the last inspection. Results in English, mathematics and science were disappointing at the end of Key Stage 2 in national tests in 1998 but this situation has been redressed so that standards in English are now above the national average and well above the national average in mathematics and science. This standard is also well above, overall, in comparison with the group of similar schools. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are even better. In national tests in 1999, the performance of pupils in reading writing and mathematics was within the top five percent nationally and was very high when compared with the group of similar schools. These standards are due to a combination of the very many good, very good and excellent facets of this school.
2. The youngest pupils in the reception class are able to listen carefully to whomsoever is speaking. They are able to talk to the children in their class, in clear voices, about their experiences of a visit to a farm. They are able to develop this skill through science lessons when they classify animals and debate whether or not hens have tails. The skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught so that in Year 1 pupils are able to use capital letters and full stops with increasing accuracy spelling common words accurately and writing with a style that shows the correct formation of letters. In their mathematics they can add sums of money accurately and can double numbers to ten. They have a good grasp of the value of numbers. Because the pupils receive effective teaching in the basics of literacy and numeracy they quickly develop confidence and so come in turn to use the skills and knowledge that they have acquired with accuracy. This enables a pupil in Year 1 to write " I like orange when the sun flames shine. I like yellow when the buttercups glow." Pupils in Year 2 continue to show imaginative use of language when one writes, " He was watching his disgusting T.V. when he heard a creaking noise coming from the attic." By the end of Key Stage 1 the highest attaining pupils are fluent readers who display very good levels of knowledge about books. They can talk about their reading preferences. Pupils at all levels express an enjoyment of books and of reading and the lowest attaining pupils are able to use different strategies effectively in tackling unfamiliar words.
3. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to build on the good work they have already done. The good teaching that typifies that seen at Key Stage 1 continues in this key stage and the work that is given to pupils continues to be very closely matched to their needs. The range of writing opportunities is broadened and literacy skills, often combined with word processing skills, are used effectively in support of other curriculum areas such as history and geography. Pupils at the end of the key stage are involved, very successfully, in completing long term assignments in history or geography, of high quality, at home. They show the ability to read a wide range of unusual and difficult words and are adept at recognising elements of writing styles. They read a wide range of material for pleasure and purpose. Literacy skills and knowledge are constantly reinforced as pupils are asked to explain their thinking. They are very good at hypothesising and applying themselves logically to the planning and performing of experiments. They are used to exemplifying their answers from text or from other sources of evidence. They have good research skills .In mathematics and science they show that they have a broad range of practical experience. They develop

strategies – for example in solving problems about volume and capacity – and are also able to check the validity of their conclusions.

**Teaching is good – a particular strength of which is the fact that relationships with pupils are excellent.**

4. There has been a significant improvement to the quality of teaching since the last inspection report and those issues that related to the quality of teaching in that report have been successfully addressed.
5. Teachers set high but realistically achievable goals for their pupils and are able to do this because their practice informs them very accurately of their pupils' needs. The systems and structures that the school employs effectively support teachers in this respect. Teachers have responded very effectively to national initiatives such as those for literacy and numeracy and this in turn has had the effect of opening up their practice to their colleagues.
6. This is a school where all concerned share the school's aims and where there is strong unity of purpose. Teachers have excellent control of their pupils because they have created very good relationships with them. Communication with pupils is clear. Consequently they know what their teachers are trying to do for them and they respond very well.
7. The school operates an effective discipline system which is clearly understood by all and which is consistently applied throughout. In many lessons it was observed that on no occasion did the teacher have to raise the issue of unacceptable behaviour at all. Such apparently effortless control is in fact based on all the very effective skills and levels of commitment that teachers bring to the classroom.
8. Whilst teaching benefits greatly from the structures and systems that allow it to function effectively it is also true to say that teachers contribute significantly to the ethos of the school by the way in which they act as good role models for their pupils. They have the ability to realise that whilst teaching needs to be effective it can also be pleasant. Consequently classrooms are places that combine a relaxed atmosphere with a sense of purpose. Comfortable relationships and the confidence of both pupils and teachers, allow freedom of expression, humour, enjoyment and the satisfaction that comes with success.

**The leadership of the headteacher is excellent- she has worked most effectively with all staff and governors to secure significant improvements and to maintain those already high standards.**

9. The headteacher has been in post for a little under two years and during this time has contributed most significantly to the present very high levels of effectiveness demonstrated by the school. She has coped very well with the absence of a senior member of staff and created a senior management team that was still able to function well and make progress. The school's priorities were very clearly outlined at the earliest opportunity and effective action taken to meet them. The high standards that obtained previously have been maintained. The school has made significant improvements under her leadership since the last inspection report was produced.
10. One of the headteacher's successes has been in raising the quality of teaching and this she has done by creating a system of school management that is inclusive and which allows change to be initiated by any member of staff. The present senior management team works effectively with middle management teams and with clear

communication there are effective pathways for the raising and resolving of issues from either the top down or vice versa. Teachers are actively engaged in the management of the school and contribute well as coordinators or as class teachers. They carry out comprehensive audits of their performances and contribute in full to the school development plan. The formation of the school development plan also involves the sampling of parent and pupil opinion. The governing body is also well placed to contribute to the plan and to oversee its completion.

11. There is an effective system of monitoring and evaluating teaching and planning. The headteacher has formed the staff into a very highly motivated and effective body and the results are plain to see in all areas of school life. The school development plan recognises the need to extend the already excellent work done in monitoring and evaluating teaching and planning to include a scrutiny of work in pupils' books. The school also has highly effective systems for assessing pupils' progress and attainment and so is in a very strong position to set targets for individual pupils.
12. The headteacher has worked very well with the governing body to produce an effective partnership. Those governors with individual responsibilities are conscientious in their role and whilst there are some relatively new governors all are well aware of the priorities for the school.
13. The headteacher has other specific areas of responsibility such as being the designated child protection officer and the coordinator for special educational needs. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of provision made for pupils with special educational needs and the school's policy of total inclusion for pupils with special needs is to be highly commended. This provision is also greatly appreciated by the parents. As mentor of a newly qualified teacher the headteacher has given excellent support - as have other members of staff - and this has enabled the newly qualified teacher to have successfully completed her first year of teaching.
14. As central figure the headteacher has been responsible for managing a school with very high standards. She has influenced all areas of school life and played the major role in developing a school which is now providing very good value for money.

**The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils is excellent – in response to the good teaching they receive the pupils show themselves to be sensible, confident and enthusiastically involved in their own learning.**

15. One of the most obvious strengths of the school lies in the ways in which the pupils respond. Their behaviour is excellent and their attitudes are also excellent. They are very actively engaged in their own learning, take delight in it and enjoy the success that they all achieve. Observation showed that it was rare that a teacher had to remind a pupil of what was expected of them in terms of their behaviour.

16. These are very confident young people who relate very well to adults. They have the confidence to engage them in conversation. An example of this could be seen in the way in some of the youngest and some of the oldest pupils would choose to sit with the headteacher at her table during the lunch period. They also have respect for the views of one another and sensitively explore areas in discussion where the less secure may not.
17. When asked to work in pairs as was the case in a Year 6 English lesson they did so with no fuss and in the short time allotted to them prepared very good responses to a series of questions about the interpretation of a Charles Causley poem. A younger pupil in Key Stage 1 was heard to make the unsolicited offer of working with, and updating, a pupil who had missed the previous lesson.
18. Because of the school's very strong and positive ethos the pupils understand why they are there. Because of good teaching they are given clear objectives and because they are encouraged to assess whether or not they have reached their objectives the pupils know where they are up to and where they are going next. They respond in a sensible and mature way and appreciate the opportunities they are offered. They enjoy their school and their work.

**Provision for pupils with special educational needs – currently with the headteacher, as coordinator for special educational needs - is very good.**

19. The previous inspection report showed that this provision was not as good as it should have been and since that time there has been a significant improvement to the point where the provision is now very good. This is due, in the large part, to the influence, expertise and effectiveness of the headteacher but also to the commitment of the rest of the teaching staff.
20. Planning and teaching shows that work is targeted specifically to meet the needs of individual pupils. Teachers and classroom assistants have a thorough knowledge of the content of individual pupil's education plans. External support for pupils on the higher levels of the register of special needs is good.
21. The headteacher has an excellent knowledge of procedures and has established a very good working relationship with external support agencies. There are also very good links with parents and they are involved in review and evaluation procedures for all pupils with individual education plans. Inspection of the register shows that pupils with special needs are making good progress and that the effective review of needs means that the school is always in a strong position to provide for them.
22. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are most effective whether at the earliest age through analysis of early assessment data or in the subsequent stages of a pupil's education. The school's policy of inclusion and the effectiveness and commitment with which it is followed through are very good indicators of the school's commitment to serving the needs of all its pupils.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Elements of the teaching of information and communications technology.**

23. The school development plan recognises the need for development in this area. Progress was, to some extent, inhibited by the absence on ill health grounds of the coordinator. The audit of staff training needs shows that several of them feel that they are in need of some training that will raise their levels of confidence and competency. Scrutiny of work and display shows that pupils have very good levels of skill in word processing and desktop publishing but that skills are not so well developed in the areas of control and monitoring. Pupils do have good access to the Internet and are also good at retrieving information from CD ROM.

### **The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of work in pupils' books**

24. The school has excellent procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum but, as yet, these procedures do not extend to a systematic review of the content of pupil's books. Consequently it has not been possible for the school to judge the effectiveness of its planning and teaching in this respect. The school development plan recognises this and the school plans to address the issue.

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

25. The governing body and senior management team of the school should seek to: -
- Raise standards in information and communications technology by ensuring that staff training needs have been thoroughly audited and that these needs are met; that all essential hardware and software is in place and that monitoring and evaluating of planning and teaching of the full breadth of the curriculum is undertaken.
  - Introduce a systematic approach to sampling/ scrutinising the work completed by pupils.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	22
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
	18	73	9	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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		239
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		37

#### 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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	95.1
National comparative data	94.1

#### 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**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	14	21	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	20	21	21
	Total	34	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97(89)	100 (94)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (80)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	34	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (86)	97 (94)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	86 (84)	87 (85)

*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	1999	15	20	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	14
	Girls	18	16	21
	Total	30	28	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (76)	80 (48)	100 (48)
	National	70 (63)	69 (61)	87 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	17	16	19
	Total	30	29	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (86)	83 (91)	94 (95)
	National	68 (63)	69 (64)	75 (70)

*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	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	203
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	29.9

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**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.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	98/99
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	£
Total income	345419
Total expenditure	347496
Expenditure per pupil	1416
Balance brought forward from previous year	26936
Balance carried forward to next year	24879

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

240

Number of questionnaires returned

95

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	48	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	40	5	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	55	4	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	58	6	2	1
The teaching is good.	43	49	5	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	54	12	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	51	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	38	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	57	11	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	38	48	11	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	46	8	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	45	23	4	4

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed concern at the meeting for parents about the fact that the school had had two long term staff absences. It was noted that this is no longer the case.