

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ECKINGTON C OF E FIRST SCHOOL**

Eckington, Pershore

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116806

Headteacher: Mrs. C. Millward

Reporting inspector: Mr. G. Warner  
2818

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> July 2000

Inspection number: 190679  
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 10
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane Eckington Pershore Worcestershire
Postcode:	WR10 3AU
Telephone number:	01386 750666
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Peter Thomas
Date of previous inspection:	3 <sup>rd</sup> December 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. G. Warner	Registered inspector	English	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Art	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Geography	Key Issues for action
		History	
		Music	
		Religious education	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
		Special educational needs	
Ms J. McHugh	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Mr. D. Carrington	Team inspector	Mathematics	Teaching and learning
		Science	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Design and technology	Leadership and management
		Information technology	
		Physical education	
		Equality of opportunity	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is in the village of Eckington, near Pershore in Worcestershire. It serves its local community and some surrounding villages. Since the last inspection there has been a complete change of staff with a new head teacher appointed nearly two years ago. The head teacher has some part time responsibility as a class teacher. At the time of the present inspection she was teaching the Year 4/5 class for part of the time due to the absence of the Year 4/5 teacher. This absence meant that the part time Year 2/3 teacher was working on a full time basis and a supply teacher was sharing class teaching responsibility with the head teacher. The Reception/Year 1 class was taught by two teachers on an agreed job share basis.

There are 71 pupils on roll, 29 boys and 42 girls aged between four and ten years. Fifteen pupils are on the special educational needs register, a proportion above the national average. No pupils hold statements of special needs. The number of free meals percentage is distorted because the local authority does not serve hot meals. The one pupil shown as eligible is well below average but is an unreliable figure. There are no pupils who come from homes where English is not spoken. At the time of the inspection two children in the Reception class were under five years of age. On entry to school the attainment of children under five is below average overall.

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

Eckington C.E. First School is an improving, effective school. Its positive ethos is expressed in its aims of promoting continuous improvement, self-esteem and a sense of community through experiencing a set of relevant opportunities responding to individual needs. The weaknesses reported at the time of the last inspection have been addressed since the appointment of the new head teacher. The positive leadership of the head teacher and the supportive and involved governing body underpin the school's improvement. Parents and carers are now supportive of the school, and together with teachers form a secure partnership in their children's education. The good relationships between adults and pupils and pupils with one another further support the school's work. Teaching is much improved as teachers provide interesting lessons. Standards are not yet reflected in national test results. Nevertheless, systems are in place to analyse and improve performance. The school has good capacity for further improvement. Bearing all improvements in mind the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Good teaching and effective support now ensure good progress being made in both key stages in English, geography, history, religious education and music and at Key Stage 1 in mathematics, science and information technology and very good progress in art across both key stages
- Provides effectively for the early years
- Makes good provision for special educational needs
- Involves parents well in their children's education
- Developing the team approach well
- Caring for its pupils
- Giving pupils a broad and balanced curriculum

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

- Standards in English and mathematics are not yet high enough in national tests
- All aspects of evaluation and monitoring of the school's achievements
- The role of subject co-ordinators

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*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 1996. Good progress has been made in responding to the key issues that were raised. Teaching is much improved, especially in the early years and at Key Stage 1. Policies and schemes of work have been provided for information technology and music. Subject responsibilities have been suitably redistributed as changes in staff have occurred. The quality of education is now good and pupils learn in a happy, stimulating environment. The school has started to address the issue of cost effectiveness but this still needs to be further developed. Realistic targets have been set for standards to be raised but on the evidence of inspection they could be more challenging. The strengths of the school now far outweigh its weaknesses.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
reading	B	C	D	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	C	D	D	E	
mathematics	A	A	E	E*	

Standards in national test results are uneven. The pupils taking the tests until 1999 have not benefited from all of the school's systems that are now securely in place. They reflect the difficulties that the school had until the changes made by the present school management. From inspection findings it is clear that the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact upon learning. Inspection findings show that subjects are improving. Preliminary information for 2000 National test results is indicative of definite improvement. This is well supported by the positive features identified in inspection findings.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils concentrate well and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and show respect. They understand and follow the school rules. Different age groups mix together well both in class and at break and lunch times.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Staff and pupils have respect for one another. Relationships are good between all members of the school community. Pupils often help each other and they are also prepared to help adults as well because of good role models demonstrated by staff.
Attendance	Very good. The level of attendance for authorised absence is significantly below the national average with no unauthorised absence.

## 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 has improved since the time of the last inspection and is now of good quality overall. In 73% of observations the quality of teaching was good and in 17% it was very good. Teaching in the remaining 10% of lessons was satisfactory. Therefore there was no unsatisfactory teaching during the course of the inspection week. Teaching is good in English and in mathematics but this has not yet been reflected in national test results. Good teaching of children under five gets them off to a secure start and into good learning habits early on in their school life. There is good teaching in all classes in the school, including the Year 4/5 class at the time of inspection. The key strengths in teaching include well prepared lessons, effective management, good use of resources and particularly good team working. Good teaching enables pupils with special educational needs to meet the individual targets set for them. The marking policy of the school is, however, inconsistently applied in setting targets for improvement for all pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is well balanced and has good breadth. There is an appropriate emphasis upon literacy and numeracy which are also developed in other subjects in the school's cross curricular approach to planning and lesson delivery. All statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided for them, including involvement in extra curricular activities. They are effectively supported as a result of well devised and regularly reviewed Individual Education Plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Through well planned experiences, the school provides effectively for pupils' growth in their personal, moral, social and cultural development. They are aware of the impact their actions have on others and show respect for different values and beliefs. Provision for spiritual development is not as strongly developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. All staff show a strong commitment to the care of pupils. Academic guidance is satisfactory but marking of work is inconsistently indicating to pupils what they need to do in order to improve their work.
Partnership with parents and carers	The partnership with parents and the wider community to support pupils' learning is a strength of the school. Parents are very supportive of its aims and values and appreciate the improvements that have been made, particularly in the last two years.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher has made a determined and very successful start to her job. Her purposeful leadership is giving a strong direction to the school. Although she has increased subject co-ordinators' responsibilities there is not yet enough opportunity for them to evaluate and monitor subject strengths and weaknesses in a formal way.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are supportive and involved in the work of the school and fulfil all their statutory duties well and are having a significant impact on the direction of the school. Governors are upholding the principles of best value soundly but this could be more clearly advanced.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Governors receive data about the school's performance and although individual governors have good insight into standards the governing body as a whole does not evaluate fully the curriculum, teaching and learning to aid school improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The small number of staff are hard working and committed to raising standards in the school. Resources are used well to promote effective teaching and learning. Particularly good use is made of the more recent additions such as the computer suite and the more fully stocked library. The newly acquired space in school is used very effectively.

## 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>• The strong leadership and management of the school by the head teacher</li> <li>• That their children are making good progress</li> <li>• That their children like school</li> <li>• That the school expects their children to work hard and achieve well</li> <li>• That the children are well behaved and responsible</li> <li>• That they could approach the school with any questions and problems knowing they would be well received.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They would like to be better informed as to how their children are getting on</li> <li>• They would like to have more homework</li> <li>• They would like a greater range of extra curricular activities</li> </ul>

64% of parents completed the questionnaire and 16 parents attended a meeting with the registered inspector before the inspection took place. Parents' positive views about the school are endorsed by inspectors' findings. The inspection team does not agree with parents' views about extra curricular activities but does agree that it would be helpful for them to receive more accurate information about how their children are getting on and there is evidence that the school's more recent efforts to give pupils homework on a more consistent basis is successful.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Since the last inspection nearly four years ago, the school has had an uneven performance in the national test results. Pupils have, however, made good progress in English, religious education, geography, history and music across both key stages. Progress in mathematics, science and information technology at Key Stage 1 is also now improved with satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2. The provision of an appropriate policy and scheme of work for information technology and music have supported developments well in both subjects. Progress in art is now very good across both key stages. Progress is satisfactory in design and technology and physical education.

2. The impact of good leadership, significantly better teaching and improved balance in the planned curriculum are major reasons why standards are lifting. Standards currently are higher at Key Stage 1 because of the changes that have taken place in the school since the appointment of the head teacher nearly two years ago. It is also the case that pupils in the Year 4/5 class in the school have had less time to benefit from the good quality education that is now being provided. The school is aware of the need to continue to raise standards and through its action plan has determined that they will be raised year on year. The school has set realistic targets and is well on track to meet them but they could be more challenging if they are to reflect the ambitions of the head teacher and governing body.

3. When children under five enter school their attainment is below average in all areas of learning. The wide range of experiences given to them enhance their learning quickly so that good progress is made in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. By the time they are five most are working at average levels. Significant value is added to children's education at this stage by the school. Children make rapid gains because of the good quality teaching and support that they receive with their individual needs being met effectively at this stage.

4. Results in national tests at Key Stage 1 do not yet reflect the better quality education now being given to pupils. Results do not compare favourably with similar schools, though this is in an authority where the free meals benchmark does not apply as cooked meals are not provided. There is no significant variation in results in English and science between boys and girls but there is variation in mathematics where girls generally did better than boys. The school is aware of all these factors and is working hard at ensuring that standards are being raised. Preliminary information for 2000 tests is indicative of definite improvement, which is well supported by the positive features identified in inspection findings.

5. Inspection findings show standards of work are average in English, mathematics and science at both key stages. They are also average at both key stages in information technology and in line with the level expected by the syllabus followed by Worcestershire schools in religious education. Standards are above what could be expected in art and in line with what could be expected in geography, history, music, design and technology and physical education.

6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially in developing language, literacy and numeracy skills. They are well supported by both teachers and support staff. Their gains in learning are closely monitored and efficiently recorded through the regular review process. Information gathered is well used in order to set new targets. Individual Education Plans are precise and well written with all staff aware of their content and work being set for pupils at an appropriate level.

7. The school has also evaluated the needs of potentially talented and gifted pupils. It has been effectively responsive to these pupils' needs by giving them regular time when they work with older pupils in other classes where they are suitably intellectually challenged. They enjoy this time and make equally appropriate responses to the demands made upon them. This is yet a further successful strategy used by the school in its determined efforts to raise standards.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

8. All pupils, including those who are not yet five and those with special educational needs, display good attitudes to learning. In the majority of lessons seen pupils concentrate well, show an interest in the tasks set them and are keen to learn. However on a few occasions, such as during assembly, where the content fails to fire their imagination, pupils become restless and concentration lapses.

9. Overall, pupil's behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. There are no instances of exclusion. Pupils are polite and show respect for the books and resources they use. It is evident by their behaviour that pupils understand and abide by the school rules. Staff provide very good role models and there are many examples of praise and encouragement being used by them to promote positive behaviour. The different age groups mix well together both in class and at break and lunchtime. Both parents and pupils say that when rare instances of bullying have occurred these have been effectively and quickly sorted out. The school's systems for promoting a "large family atmosphere", encouraging good behaviour and the way these are applied is good. Parents support and appreciate the high standards of behaviour the school now achieves.

10. Relationships are good between all members of the school community with staff and pupils sharing a mutual respect. They often help each other without prompting. For example, during a visit to a nearby stream a boy in Year 4, having successfully scrambled up a slippery bank, immediately turned around and proffered a helping hand to pull up a member of staff who was struggling behind.

11. The youngest pupils are made to feel secure and settle quickly into school routines. The school has an inclusive approach to pupils with special educational needs and sees them as an integral part of the school community. They are expected to work both independently and collaboratively, and as a result have good relationships with teachers, classroom assistants and other pupils.

12. The level of attendance at school is very good. The consistent approach of all staff and high expectations of good behaviour and regular attendance contribute to the calm and purposeful atmosphere of the school.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The 1996 inspection report identified that teaching was satisfactory overall throughout the school. However, nearly one lesson in ten was of unsatisfactory quality. Inspectors judged that teaching was unsatisfactory overall in information technology and for the under fives and there was a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in science. The best teaching, which was good, was to be seen in physical education. Weak subject knowledge, lack of understanding of the needs of the youngest children in school, the level of expectation, particularly in relation to the demands placed on higher attaining pupils, unsatisfactory use of time and unsatisfactory use of homework were all identified as comparative weaknesses. During the current inspection it became evident that key managers have strengthened teaching, and that its quality is much more uniform across all three classes.

14. Today, teaching is good overall. It is also good for pupils in the three distinct key stages in school, (the under fives and Key Stages 1 and 2). Inspectors observed 41 lessons or part lessons and judged that teaching was at least satisfactory in every one, with no unsatisfactory teaching at all. Further than this, teaching was good or better in 90% of all lessons, including 17% where it was very good. This is good improvement since the last inspection.

15. With a teaching profile as strong as this, it is not surprising that there are few elements that require improvement. In fact, no elements of teaching were rated as unsatisfactory anywhere in school, although best practice is not widely shared. However, there are three aspects that could be strengthened in order to make them as good as the rest. Firstly, lesson planning is not as well-focused as it might be. This is because the objectives identified are sometimes rather vague, or focus on what will be *taught* or the activities to be undertaken. The emphasis is not always on exactly what knowledge, skills and understanding will be *learned*. In other ways, lesson planning is effective, as it is well detailed and, in literacy and numeracy, follows the outlines of the national strategies.

16. The second aspect for enhancement is linked to the first. Day to day assessment of what is learned is successful enough but is not always geared precisely enough to the learning outcomes. This has two effects. Marking does not always indicate ways in which pupils can improve their work and the setting and sharing of targets for learning with pupils at the start of lessons, and joint evaluation of them at the end, are rare.

17. Homework use is satisfactory in that pupils take reading, spellings and tables home and they complete tasks related to other ongoing work. However, the evidence for the regularity and consistency of homework setting in Year 4/5 has not been great. This is the third aspect of teaching that the school should monitor carefully.

18. Despite these three things, teaching is effective overall and there are many strengths. Chief of these is the good teaching of basic skills. In fact, this is very good in Key Stage 1 and the managers are working hard to make the already good teaching of such skills match this level in the early years and Key Stage 2. The impact of this quality teaching is to be seen in the good rates by which pupils build skills and knowledge in literacy, numeracy and other subjects. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and is, in no small part, due to the effectiveness of basic literacy and numeracy teaching.

19. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This has improved clearly since the last inspection in subjects such as information technology and music. Expectation level is good and the teaching methods used are good. There are no problems of control and discipline, class management being good. The use of time, accommodation and learning resources is good. The learning support staff make valuable and effective contribution to the overall effectiveness of teaching, as shown in English, mathematics and information technology lessons amongst others.

20. Because teaching is a success, learning follows suit. Pupils work hard in lessons and they maintain an even pace and productivity rate. A particular strength is pupils' knowledge of how well they are learning. This is promoted by the good methods teachers adopt in lessons. The use of questioning is focused not just on finding out what pupils know but also to show them where improvement can be made and as a means of pushing them on in their learning. The plenary sessions at the end of lessons often have a good emphasis on *this is what we have learned and this is what we are going to do next*. Improvements flagged for the target setting process will make pupils' knowledge of their successes and shortcomings in learning even more powerful.

21. Pupils' response to lessons is often good, though there is some fidgeting by a few in some lessons and this affects their potential to learn in as effective a way as possible. Once this distraction is overcome, pupils concentrate well and are capable of independent work in which they show responsibility and maturity. On a few occasions, pupils are over-dependent on staff, as shown when teachers make the selection of materials and methods for them, as in some science lessons. In other lessons the good adult: pupil ratio means that there is the possibility that too much support may be given. The school is alert to these matters and intends to monitor them carefully.

22. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and they make good strides with their learning. Individual Education Plans are precise with well defined targets. They are reviewed regularly and involve support staff and outside agencies when it is appropriate. Methods adopted enable effective learning to take place.

23. The good attributes of teaching and the impact these have on learning are shown clearly in a Year 4/5 English lesson on mnemonics that was observed on the first day of inspection. The teacher had prepared thoroughly and from the first minute adopted a brisk pace that caught up the pupils and moved them on with their learning. There was very good focus on the contributions made by pupils and their understanding as well as knowledge advanced quickly. By the end of an enjoyable lesson, the pupils were able to identify words they found taxing to spell and could suggest amusing mnemonics to help them remember the letter sequence. More than this, at the end of a very productive 45 minutes, the class were ready for the equal demands of the literacy hour that followed and continued to work effectively as they studied non-fiction writing in some detail.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

24. The curriculum was shown to be out of balance to some degree in the last inspection report. Information technology and music did not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, the work for the under fives omitted some aspects such as knowledge and understanding of the world and the provision of schemes of work to assist coherent planning was deemed a weakness. This affected provision for the higher attaining pupils in particular, though those with special educational needs were catered for soundly. Four of the key issues related to aspects of curriculum improvement. Since 1996, managers have

worked hard to improve the curriculum and they have made good progress in eliminating the weaknesses and building on strengths.

25. The curriculum is well balanced and is of good breadth. In addition, it meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum and, the school is in a strong position to meet the demands of *Curriculum 2000* when it is introduced later this year. There is appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the school has good strategies in both these elements of the work. The results of the good start made with numeracy and literacy are to be seen in the already improving standards of English and mathematics. This has not, however, been to the detriment of other subjects. Provision for information technology and music has improved and the overall curriculum gives proper emphasis to pupils' personal and social education as much as it does for their academic instruction.

26. The school is in the active process of revamping and rewriting its subject and other curricular policies and in updating all schemes of work. The curriculum itself is well-charted in the three volumes of long term planning that encompass the necessary learning experiences well. Staff have a good documentary base for their own medium and short term planning. There are some good cross-curricular approaches to planning, as seen in the effective way in which information technology is used to support learning in English, mathematics, science and geography. Literacy and numeracy planning makes frequent reference to the use of computers to further pupils' skills and knowledge.

27. The personal and social education of pupils includes the necessary strands of health, sex and drug-misuse education. Visitors make valuable contributions in promoting these aspects. Pupils' social development is enhanced effectively in the practical and co-operative learning elements of lessons. Pupils also develop strong moral instinct and a sense of what is right because curriculum and lesson planning focuses on joint learning and teachers uphold good behaviour, politeness and consideration in lessons. Quiet moments are spent in personal reflection and thought in assembly and religious education lessons, though ways to enhance pupils' spiritual development are not as strong in other subjects because they are not planned formally.

28. The curriculum encourages the all-round development of pupils well. Arts and humanities subjects are promoted as effectively as the core subjects and, pupils develop a strong sense of cultural identity. They listen to a wide range of music, take part in dance and dramatic performances, write and then word-process good quality poetry and sing cheerfully and melodiously. Participation in country dancing and maypole events brings home the cultural traditions of the Bredon Hill area. The school draws effectively on the local community in such events and visitors bring considerable expertise into school to the advantage of the pupils. The school repays the time and effort of local people by hosting the village fete, giving concerts and taking part in church and charitable events. Pupils' awareness of the importance and attractiveness of other cultures is less well developed, however.

29. The school has developed good links with other schools in the area. This is largely through the Bredon Hill cluster of first and middle schools. Shared curriculum and staff development initiatives bring advantage to the pupils as, what might otherwise be a heavy staff workload in terms of curriculum improvement is evened out by sharing the tasks with colleagues involved in similar projects elsewhere. This is mutually successful and advantageous co-operation.

30. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Where necessary, additional support is given to enable particular pupils to benefit as much as others. Thus, the pupils who have



been identified as having particular talents have regular extension activities in which they work with pupils in the class above their usual one. This stretches their intellect well and these pupils relish these times very much.

31. The school makes good educational provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities. They are effectively supported in class, in order to do well in their basic skills development.

32. Some parents expressed concerns to inspectors that there are few learning, leisure and sporting activities provided outside lessons proper. The school's small staff, in fact, go out of their way to provide good opportunities outside lessons. These are hosted on two evenings in each week, and the wide ranging activities are blocked into term long programmes to ensure that there is fair rotation and availability for all pupils. This programme of extra curricular activities receives good time allocation in total since other evenings each week are spent by staff on preparation and development. The contribution to pupils' education is strong and the take-up rate is good.

33. The monitoring of the curriculum is something that the school seeks to improve. To date there has been good monitoring of the English and mathematics curricula, though this is only gradually being extended to other subjects. This is the prime curriculum issue facing the school, but it is one that it faces up to cheerfully.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

34. Arrangements for ensuring that the school is a safe, and supportive environment are very effective. Child protection procedures are excellent. Staff show strong commitment to the care of pupils and liaise closely with welfare services when necessary. The school nurse holds a regular "drop in clinic" at the school, which is used by pupils and parents to get information on a variety of health education issues.

35. The governors and staff ensure routine health and safety checks and regular audits are carried out. There is good procedure for the administration of first aid and since the last report, development of the building means the school now has a designated, suitably equipped area for the care of ill or injured pupils.

36. The school has good systems to identify, assess, support and monitor pupils with special educational needs at an early stage, which enable them to make good progress. Those with Individual Education Plans are given appropriate achievable targets, which are reviewed regularly and known by all staff. The school fully implements the requirements of the Code of Practice.

37. The monitoring of pupil's personal development as they move through the school is satisfactory. However, marking of pupil's work is inconsistent.

38. Assessment procedures were judged to be adequate in the last inspection report. There were a number of issues, including assessment not identifying all the needs of children aged under five, though there were also strengths, particularly concerning the assessment of pupils with special educational needs. It is clear from the report that assessment was in need of further development to produce a rigorous system that identified clearly every pupils' needs across the full range of the curriculum.

39. There has been good improvement made to assessment, so that today, it is good in the core subjects of English and mathematics and is satisfactory in all other subjects. The procedures for assessment require some enhancement in information technology and the foundation subjects to ensure a uniform system across the school. However, teachers know well what their pupils are achieving and they match the work and their own teaching methods well to the needs of the pupils.

40. The use of the information produced by assessment is satisfactory. It could be better, however, and the school is determined that it should be. The process of setting targets for learning in lessons, sharing them with pupils and reviewing them at the end of the session is not widespread. The targets for pupils with individual education plans as part of their special educational needs are good. Staff work well to ensure that the work set is well matched to these targets and there are regular assessments and reviews of progress.

41. Regular attendance at school is encouraged with good procedures for recording and monitoring pupil's absence.

42. The high expectations by staff, home school partnership, ethos of care and support, good relationships and behaviour in the school, together, make a positive contribution towards raising pupils' achievements and self esteem. The support of so many is commendable. However, on a few occasions the very high ratio of adults to pupils inhibits pupils' personal development. For example during a Year 4 lesson on information technology pupils were not given sufficient opportunities to work things out for themselves and therefore take some responsibility for their own learning.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

43. The partnership with parents and the wider community to help support pupils learning is a strength of the school. Parents and carers speak highly of the school. They are very supportive of its aims and values and appreciate the improvements in all areas during the past two years.

44. There are good communications with parents both verbally and in writing which keep them informed of day-to-day matters. The governors' annual report to parents and school prospectus are good. Parents appreciate the opportunities to speak with staff on a daily basis. However they expressed concern about the inconsistent use of homework and the lack of information about the curriculum to enable them to judge their children's attainment.

45. The inspection team find these concerns justified to some degree. The school has begun to provide curriculum information evenings and inform parents at the start of each term what topics will be covered. Parents are invited to come into school and view lessons taking place. A homework policy is in place but was not always used effectively in the Year 4/5 class until the recent staff changes. Its more effective use now enables parents to support their child's learning better. At present, end of year progress reports, whilst telling parents what their child knows and can do, are not making clear whether progress made is sufficient. They do not explain clearly the strengths and weaknesses in their child's learning, in each subject, and how improvements can be made. The school has begun to address these concerns.

46. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly informed of their children's progress and are fully involved in the review process. Many adults help at the school with a variety of tasks from listening to children read to helping with internal decoration. During the inspection a member of the local community enthralled a class with her account of a holiday in Ramsgate during the Second World War and by the comparison with holidays taken by children now.

47. The Friends of Eckington School hold social and fundraising events that are well supported by the whole community and raise substantial sums of money for the benefit of the pupils. One example, of which they are justifiably proud, is the new technology suite. Pupils are now able to participate in all areas of food and design technology within a pleasant, well-maintained and suitably equipped environment.

48. The very strong support of parents and the community in a partnership with the school to support its aims does much to raise the self-esteem of the pupils and contributes to all aspects of their development.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

49. The school was led and managed satisfactorily overall when inspectors reported last time. Two key issues related to management, the need to establish clearer leadership in order to foster consistent implementation of the school's aims, values and policies and to ensure that the statutory requirements for information technology and music were met. Additionally, the limited role of subject co-ordinators, weaknesses in monitoring and the dated nature of many policies were all flagged for action. There was an appropriate level of resourcing, although the amount of non-teaching support was low, and finances were managed securely. Today, management and leadership are strong and the school is in a firm position to continue the good rate of improvement made to date.

50. The head teacher has made a determined and very successful start to her job. Other staff, governors and visitors all testify to the good impact that the head teacher has had on making the necessary improvements in school. Inspectors found much evidence to show that her purposeful leadership is giving strong direction to the school and that everyone knows what has to be pursued and why.

51. Because the school is small, much in management devolves to a few people. The head teacher has worked hard to make the distribution of management responsibilities as equal and fair as conditions permit. She takes the lead role in aspects such as monitoring and evaluation, though she has also increased subject co-ordinators' responsibilities and widened their influence. This is not yet complete as co-ordinators have few opportunities to monitor the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects in a formal, direct way. It is, however clear that the management structure of the school is now on a much surer footing than previously and that staff are keen to take on additional duties of management. The head teacher has created a good climate in school for improvement and staff are not fearful of monitoring, as they see it as a means to bring better education for the pupils.

52. The drive in school is all about improved standards and, in practice, the staff team ensures that the aims, values and policies of the school are implemented consistently. The school aims do not put best standards at their heart, though this does shine through in what people do. It is clear that staff are also committed to equal opportunities in learning and this shows in the good provision for pupils of all attainment levels, including those with particular gifts or talents and those with individual learning needs.

53. The management of separate aspects of the school's provision is effective. For example, the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Provision is efficiently resourced. It is well led by the head teacher as special educational needs co-ordinator.

54. Governors are very much part of school life. They maintain strong and regular links with school and many visit school at least weekly. There is a programme of governors' observations of lessons that are followed by discussions and feed-back sessions to keep everyone well informed. This level of support is valued by the head teacher and staff and is an effective way of ensuring that everyone pursues the same goals. Governors generally uphold all statutory duties well and they have significant impact on the direction of the school. One aspect of their work is not as strong though. This relates to gauging the effectiveness of the school. Governors receive interpreted data about the academic success of pupils but, as a whole body, they do not use original data, such as found in the school's Panda report, to check that decisions bear fruit in terms of improved results. Individual governors have good insights into standards, but this is not consistent and the linking of outcome to the evaluation of decisions is in its infancy. In addition, ways and means to check the school is competitive and compares well with other schools are not as formal as they might be. In all, governors are upholding the principles of Best Value soundly, but they could quite easily improve on this.

55. The school has good priorities for development and past priorities have been realised well. These priorities have been supported effectively by prudent financial housekeeping. The procedures for financial management and control are good. Audit recommendations have been responded to positively. Additional funding, such as that to boost standards or for pupils with special educational needs, is targeted well at its specified purpose and the school makes good use of all the resources at its disposal. Accommodation is very good as the buildings have been upgraded very well and under-used rooms brought into intensive use. The state of cleanliness and maintenance is very good and is a tribute to the hard work of the caretaker. There are no major shortages of learning equipment and materials and such resources are used well by staff. In all, the limited funds available to the school are used well and governors and managers have ironed out the tightness of past funding, to allow a little contingency for the future. In consequence staffing levels are adequate in order for the full range of the National Curriculum subjects to be delivered effectively. The secretary has developed good routines for the day-to-day administration and organisation of the school and new technology is used well in this. The secretary performs her duties well.

56. The head teacher has ensured that the school's priorities are expressed clearly in the school development plan and that they are tied to sensible use of finance. All staff and the governors know these priorities and all pursue them with commitment. The staff team and the governors demonstrate good capacity to sustain improvement. Staff are deployed well and the learning support staff play a good role in raising standards and improving the quality of education. Good induction and continuing support for new staff ensures that everyone takes up the challenge of improvement well.

57. The school's targets for attainment look to be exceeded this year. Those for 2001 and 2002 were set in the light of the 'disappointing-to-managers' standards in 1999, and will require review once the formal results for 2000 are set against national indicators in the coming autumn. There is every reason to believe that increased targets will be met, such is the evidence of the impact of good management and leadership. At present, the school gives satisfactory value for money, particularly in terms of the overall level of progress made. It is very evident that the value for money is improving well. It should continue to do

so as the impact of better quality teaching brings more consistency to learning, particularly in Key Stage 2.

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

58. In order to keep improving standards the governing body, head teacher and staff should:

- (1) Continue to raise standards in English and mathematics by:
  - Continuing to set challenging targets
  - Applying assessment practices more consistently in all classes
  - Continuing to develop the accuracy of learning objectives in all subjects (Paragraphs 2, 4, 15, 40, 68, 78 and 80)
  
- (2) Improve evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning by:
  - Setting clear and measurable targets for improvement in teaching so that they can move learning forward and help to realise the school targets in the core subjects.
  - Governors giving fuller consideration to cost effectiveness in terms of best value.
  - Sharing the information about best teaching more fully throughout the school.  
(Paragraphs 15, 16, 20, 33, 54, 103, 109, 114, 118, 125 and 135)
  
- (3) Developing the role of the subject co-ordinator by:
  - Giving them more in-service training
  - Giving opportunity to observe and work alongside other teachers
  - Giving opportunity to evaluate the performance of pupils and share this knowledge with other teachers.  
(Paragraphs 51, 91, 109, 114, 125 and 135)

Although not identified as separate issues, in preparing their action plan, the governing body should also pay attention to the following:

- Improving the spiritual development of pupils  
(Paragraph 27)
- Giving further input to learning about the different cultures in the world  
(Paragraph 28)
- Re-visiting, in the light of changes being made in the school, the content and therefore the format of written reports to parents.  
(Paragraph 45)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	73	10	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	YR – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	71
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	15

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	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.0
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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	6	9	15

<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	5	5	5
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (79)	63 (79)	100 (92)
	National	77 (81)	81 (81)	84 (86)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	6
	Girls	8	8	9
	Total	13	13	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (87)	100 (86)	99 (99)
	National	81 (81)	85 (85)	86 (79)

*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	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	71
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	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
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 – Y5**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.8
Average class size	23.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y5**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	173 406
Total expenditure	165 350
Expenditure per pupil	2 328
Balance brought forward from previous year	7 230
Balance carried forward to next year	15 286



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	76
Number of questionnaires returned	49

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	57	4	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	39	18	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	47	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	43	29	10	0
The teaching is good.	43	43	12	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	25	40	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	20	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	41	8	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	35	61	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	84	16	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	47	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	38	31	0	14

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

Links with the village community have been strengthened.  
 Another few years are needed before the whole school is achieving to the higher levels of Y2 pupils.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

59. At the time of the last inspection a key issue identified for the school was to implement an appropriate curriculum for this stage of learning. Baseline assessment indicated satisfactory achievement and progress but play areas were not used, practical work was limited, there were limited opportunities for children to respond in class discussions, there was little use made of multi-sensory equipment and there were infrequent opportunities for creative development.

60. Since the last inspection there has been a complete change of staff with a recent appointment of a job share for addressing the needs of the youngest children. Before that appointment, however, all of the issues had been successfully addressed and there is no longer cause for concern about provision for early years. From inspection evidence it is clear that the input will be continued by both teachers. The provision is made in the Reception/Year 1 class. At the time of inspection there were two children aged under five in the class. There has also been a change in intake since the last inspection. Children come from a range of backgrounds and now enter Reception class attaining below average in all areas of experience. There is a team ethos, as there is generally throughout the school, and the teachers and nursery nurse work closely together and give positive support to all activities. The children often transfer from the playgroup in the village where the leader is also a school governor and so liaison is very effective. Parents and children are offered home visits and most take up this opportunity. The informal assessment begins at this point and is confirmed when formal baseline assessment is carried out after children have been in school for seven weeks. The current intake are below average in all areas of learning and inspection findings show that progress has been good as all children have made rapid gains so that they enter statutory schooling at an average level of attainment in all areas of learning.

#### ***Personal and social development***

61. Teaching of personal and social skills is good mainly because all adults act as good role models for the children by the way that they interact with one another and give support to one another in all that they do. The children are settled to a school routine. Children are happy to come to school. They arrive in a morning knowing that they will be able to join in a range of activities that will give them a great deal of enjoyment and pleasure as well as appropriate learning opportunities. They work together well in small groups in the sand and water trays in the pleasant outside area. They take great care of one another as they use the large play equipment and the wheeled toys in this outside area. Every possible use is made of this area where they have also set up their own garden centre as a result of a visit to a local garden centre. In the centre they learn to buy and sell the plants that they have planted themselves. They sustain their concentration well as they do this with good measures of confidence. Relationships with all adults are good because the children feel secure in their company. The successful outcomes to learning are partly as a result of this but also because work has been planned jointly by staff and resourced effectively in order to give children confidence.

#### ***Language and literacy***

62. The development of skills in language and literacy are recognised as being of vital importance by all staff. Thorough teaching is well planned with an emphasis upon practical activities that are included in many other areas of experience as well as in the discrete area of learning as well. Within school children learn a love of books as they take part in the

whole school book week when they dress as their favourite character. They make puppets of the Billy Goats Gruff as they develop their speaking skills by becoming the characters in that story. Teachers and nursery nurse extend their understanding of language through role play as they take them to Hartlebury Castle Museum where they become very young boot boys and scullery maids. They visit a local farm and are able to successfully answer questions about where milk comes from because they have played their part in milking the cows. As they join in with delight in reading a big book with older children they are able to identify initial sounds of words. They sometimes have difficulty in finding correct words but because all adults are sympathetic to their needs they are able to talk effectively about the events in books. Most are able to write their own first names in fairly legible and reasonably well-formed letters. The importance attached to developing language and literacy skills impacts positively on the progress made by the children.

### ***Mathematics***

63. Teaching of mathematical skills is good. The children attain at the sort of level expected by the time they enter statutory schooling. This is good progress as they enter Reception class at a below average level. Development is very much focused on practical activities. The sand and water play helps them to successfully understand large and small amounts as they use different sized containers. They capably move wooden blocks around in the outside area to confirm their knowledge of pattern and shape as well as space. In doing this they also build blocks to ten as number begins to be meaningful to them. Staff resource these activities very well and closely monitor learning. For example, the numbers to ten are effectively reinforced in meaning as they listen to the story of "The Hungry Caterpillar". They count accurately as the story unfolds because their interest has been well captured. They use accurate mathematical language as they show that they know that some of the things that the caterpillar has make it "more than" and that if they are taken away from the caterpillar it will be "less than". They find the activities enjoyable and so are well behaved and develop good attitudes to learning.

### ***Knowledge and understanding of the world***

64. It is in this area of learning that children have the lowest attainment on entry according to the baseline assessment and so they make good progress as they are at the level expected by the time they begin statutory schooling. This is because of the variety of activities that they experience. They make effective use of a temporary shelter that has been built in the outside area to discover the differences between light and dark. They learn about what happens in the local garden centre and set up their own as they turn the small house outside into a potting shed where they successfully nurture the plants that they have planted. They work capably with Lego and other plastic and wooden materials as they construct small-wheeled toys that move smoothly. They move them around to confirm their secure understanding of direction. Their understanding of differences between now and the past is clear to them through their experience as boot boys and scullery maids when they visit Hartlebury Castle Museum. This is further enhanced by their understanding about how old some parts of their own village are, such as the footbridge across the river. These activities support their development well because teachers and support staff have planned so thoroughly and made appropriate resources available so that interest is captured and sustained. The children have good attitudes to their learning in consequence.

### ***Physical development***

65. Children are below average attainment on entry to Reception class but are average by the time they reach statutory school age and have made good progress. They make good use of the classroom and outside area as they move in and out skilfully and safely. They reinforce their understanding of the need to do this when they successfully use the larger space in the hall as they join in the physical activities with older children. They cut

and stick different coloured papers as they make symmetrical shapes in order to develop their finer physical skills appropriately. They experiment with the recently acquired digital camera that records these areas of work and this increases their technology skills at the same time as their physical ones. Careful planning by teachers and support staff ensure that this range of activities is well resourced and gives children appropriate opportunities to become adept in using their physical skills accurately and effectively.

### ***Creative development***

66. All of the areas of creative development are thoroughly planned for, as they are included in the programme of activities generated by teachers and support staff. The children enter Reception class below average but are average in attainment by the time they become statutory school age. They have on going opportunities to paint, construct models and input into making collages that help to create their colourful and happy learning environment. They successfully experiment with face paint having studied clowns. They join in singing tunefully with older children as they learn to sing together in the hall. They copy adults as they make loud and soft sounds. They use actions to confirm their understanding of rhythm as they sing. They listen to music in their classroom with good measures of appreciation. Teachers and support staff have planned these activities well and used good quality resources to support the children's development and knowledge.

## **ENGLISH**

67. At the time of the last inspection, standards in English were in line with national expectations in speaking and listening, reading and writing at seven years of age whilst at Key Stage 2 attainment was average in all aspects, excepting speaking and listening where some attainment was above average. Pupils in this key stage were not involved in taking national tests as they leave the school in the year before the tests are taken. The test results for the two years before the last inspection indicated that pupils at Key Stage 1 attained broadly in line with expectations. The only validated information on test results is for Key Stage 1 pupils over the three years from 1996 to 1999 and this shows an uneven performance but overall a decline in standards. This is, however, affected by the fact that the local authority does not provide cooked meals and so the free school meals figure that is used as a benchmark is unreliable.

68. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1 when compared to all schools, reading and writing were below average. When compared to similar schools at this key stage reading and writing were well below average. Again there were no figures for pupils in Key Stage 2.

69. Inspection evidence suggests that attainment is average at both key stages with some better attainment in writing at Key Stage 1 and research at Key Stage 2. The inspection did not reveal any significant difference in attainment of boys and girls. The impact of the National Literacy Strategy has clearly had a positive effect on standards and helped to produce this better picture of attainment. It is, however, also related to the good teaching that is now taking place at both key stages and particularly to some of the very good teaching now in the Key Stage 2 class.

70. Attainment in speaking and listening is average at both key stages. Pupils enter Reception class with below average skills overall in language and literacy. Teachers and support staff work capably at developing these skills as they provide good role-play experiences that are meaningful to pupils. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils listen carefully although there are still a minority who find it difficult to settle for too long a period. Pupils are sometimes anxious to respond quickly to questions and so do not listen

as carefully as they could to one another. The strand of discussions needs to be returned to by teachers in order for the listening skills to be clearly developed although speaking skills are good. Teachers skilfully provide a range of opportunities for pupils to do this. This is where the literacy hour has supported them well in developing the skills. At the end of Key Stage 2 the benefits of the work in the earlier key stage are shown by the very good debating skills used by pupils in Year 5. An example of this is in a religious education lesson when pupils debate the meaning of forgiveness from the Christian viewpoint. They make very mature contributions to discussions and consider one another's point of view whilst being very clear about their own views. They have good measures of self-confidence in expressing their views.

71. Attainment in reading is average at both key stages. The National Literacy Strategy has had a beneficial effect upon standards at Key Stage 1. The status of reading is high in the school. Parents are well involved by the school in hearing their children read. There is regular reading practice in school to balance reading at home. The pupils use the library on a daily basis. Volunteer parents support pupils every morning in making use of the library as pupils change books before school begins. This generates a love of books and reading becomes important to pupils. The best readers are fluent and use expression well together with clear understanding of what is being read as they talk about plot and characters with confidence. Less able readers are also able to talk about their books and their characters but read at a less fluent level. Younger less able readers still use picture clues and their knowledge of the initial letters and blends of letters to support them in reading accurately. All pupils use the school library and many of them visit libraries in nearby towns and enjoy reading for pleasure as well as reading for information. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use the library very well for research where their skills are above average.

72. Attainment in writing is average with some above average attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in response to good teaching. Pupils at this key stage use writing skills well in other subjects. For example in a geography lesson all pupils have writing tasks to follow up work on land use and how this affects people's lives. The good variety of tasks ensures pupils are writing at an appropriate level. The higher attaining pupils write a diary about land use at a holiday destination. Other pupils write either letters to a friend or post cards to home. All do this with confidence and some imagination whilst retaining the factual knowledge that they have learnt in their writing. Handwriting and presentation skills are satisfactory. Good use is made of a range of dictionaries to support writing developing with accurate spelling. This is reinforced by the impetus given to spelling in the literacy hour's work.

73. Pupils make good progress across both key stages. They are being well supported by the good teaching that is now an important factor in all English lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Both teachers and support staff give them good levels of support in classrooms. Support staff have a particularly significant impact upon special needs pupils' progress. The literacy hour has also made a good contribution to progress in all of the elements of learning in English. Good use is made of computers in the recently established computer suite that is also housed in the library which supports pupils in developing their independent learning skills that are not always as well developed in other areas of learning.

74. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to English at both key stages. They are good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1 they show good levels of concentration in Year 2 as they are presented with contrasting texts in the literacy session. They show understanding of the differences between fact and fiction books even though the same theme of water is the focus of books. They enjoy "The rainbow fish" as well as "What are - Rivers?" and gain different purposeful levels of learning in consequence. In Year 4 they respond very positively as they use books, the computer and the Internet to research extensively. Their research is then shared with confidence in a plenary session. They plan conscientiously in order to present their findings to one another meaningfully.

75. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages with some very good teaching in Key Stage 2 within the framework of the literacy hour. Where teaching is most effective, teachers have secure subject knowledge. They introduce tasks to pupils very clearly. Teachers skilfully draw out points for pupils through asking open-ended questions. As a result of tasks being meaningful to pupils teachers have high expectations of responses that are invariably met. Support staff are effectively deployed and well involved in the planning, monitoring and follow up to work. Lessons are well organised with plenary sessions being used very profitably to ensure that learning is secured.

76. The co-ordinator gives good support to other teachers. Assessment practice is securely in place but there is not consistent application of the marking policy to set targets for improvement. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced successfully under her guidance and is underpinning the school's more successful practice observed during inspection. Appropriate use has been made of funding to support the development of literacy. The school is well placed to continue to raise standards in English as it has done in the unvalidated national test results in 2000. It is well on track to meet the targets that it has set for itself.

## **MATHEMATICS**

77. The previous inspection report identified that standards in mathematics were average by the age of seven and ten and that pupils made satisfactory progress in their work. In addition, teaching, although variable, was satisfactory overall, although there were weaknesses of subject management. In the years following the last inspection, standards in mathematics fluctuated widely. This was partly due to the small number of pupils entered for the national tests in some years and differences between age groups. Findings from the current inspection point to stabilisation, then gradual improvement in standards. Subject management is now much stronger and the subject is well poised for further improvement.

78. Standards in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below the level found nationally. They were even lower when set against the level found in schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. No pupils sit the Key Stage 2 national tests, as there are no Year 6 pupils in school.

79. There were some differences in the performance of boys and girls in these tests in the years up to, and including, 1999. Generally, girls did better than the boys and achieved above average standards overall whilst the standards of the boys were little different from those found nationally. During the inspection, there was little evidence to show that boys and girls are achieving at different levels, though where pupils lost concentration for brief spans, it was the boys in the main who were affected.

80. The preliminary results of the 2000 national tests indicate considerable improvement in standards over those of the previous year. Whilst there is no information to set these results in a national context, it is clear that the school has much improved not just the overall figures, but also the proportion attaining levels 2A and 3 in relation to those achieving

levels 2C and 2B. It is clear that the school has exceeded its current target for mathematics and that it is well on the way to achieving those for 2001 and 2002. These targets are appropriate in the light of the 1999 results, but managers and governors should consider revising them once the final data for 2000 is available.

81. Inspectors judge that standards in mathematics are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and that pupils are also working at the expected level by the time they are ten. There is much more consistency in the balance between the different attainment targets and standards are even across aspects such as investigation and problem solving, data handling and shape, space and measures. Good progress has been made with the introduction of the numeracy hour and this is having positive impact on standards of basic number and arithmetic. The missing element in this is speed. Pupils are generally accurate in their calculations but few time targets are set and there is little working against the clock.

82. Pupils make good strides with their learning across time in Key Stage 1. Progress has not been as marked in Key Stage 2, though there are signs that recent changes to teaching and the curriculum have boosted rates of progress. They are satisfactory overall and show improvement in the second key stage.

83. Teaching follows a similar pattern to the rate of learning, being good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Teachers in Key Stage 2 are beginning to broaden the focus of teaching away from over-emphasis on the second attainment target, number and arithmetic, so that all four elements are held in appropriate balance. In all, the precise statement of what knowledge, skills and understanding are to be learned in lessons, the setting, sharing and reviewing of targets for learning in lessons and amounts of homework set all need improvement. Teachers' subject knowledge, the methods used, the teaching of basic skills and the effective use of resources are strengths of mathematics teaching.

84. Pupils respond well to opportunities in mathematics lessons. There is generally a *buzz* to learning, behaviour is good and relationships are a strength. At times, pupils are a little too dependent on staff, though most show good signs of being able to work responsibly and in a mature way when no adult is close by. Pupils build basic mathematics knowledge and skills well and they develop useful insights into pattern and relationship to help them solve more complex problems.

85. There is good management of mathematics. The level of documentary support to help planning is good and the school's programme of monitoring standards, teaching and the curriculum is well-focused on mathematics. All staff are deployed well and the non-teaching staff do a very thorough and successful job of supporting pupils in their learning. The head teacher takes the lead in the management of mathematics at present and has been responsible for the many gains made. Mathematics provision has been consolidated and then improved well. It is a subject that staff enjoy teaching and that pupils enjoy learning. The prospect of continued future improvement is good.

## SCIENCE

86. During the week of the last inspection little science was taught, though it was judged that standards were sound and that progress was satisfactory. The report indicated that the position regarding standards and progress was stronger in Key Stage 2 than in the first key stage. Teaching was satisfactory in 1996, although it varied widely with one third of lessons being of good quality and another third being unsatisfactory. The report identified a number of shortcomings in science, including imbalance in time allocation for the subject and a lack of pace in lessons. Today, many of the inconsistencies have been ironed-out and science is an improved subject, though the school recognises that there are still things to be done to boost things even more.

87. The results of the 1999 teacher assessments show that pupils at Eckington school attained standards in science that were very high at the end of Key Stage 1. There are no comparable statistics for Key Stage 2, as there are no Year 6 pupils in school. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 3 at the age of seven was above the national average.

88. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards are at the expected level by the age of seven and ten. The scrutiny of pupils' past work showed more uniform coverage of science in Key Stage 1, than in the later part of Key Stage 2. Pupils build good basic knowledge of science and older pupils make predictions, conduct fair tests and make detailed comparisons of the outcomes. Standards in these things would be even higher if pupils in Key Stage 2 had more consistent opportunities to consolidate and extend their learning. The record of past work in Key Stage 2 shows times when no science was taught. This has been corrected, and science is now taught much more consistently. Standards are rising, and are satisfactory overall, because of this, but they have yet to reach the heights attained at some times in the past.

89. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. There are times when teachers over-control the work. Pupils show that they are capable of working independently and in a mature and responsible way. However, these strengths are not always put to the test and teachers often make all of the choices of materials, methods and ways to record the work. This denies pupils the opportunity to develop their own ways of working and restrict their insights into, for example, fair testing. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 2. Despite this, there is now evidence of much more investigative and experimental science than in the past. Additionally, learning support staff do a good job of supporting pupils with special educational needs in order to enable them to participate and benefit fully from the experiences provided in science.

90. Pupils are interested in their science work and put in good effort. Science lessons are purposeful and well focused on the key objectives for learning. This enables pupils to build skills and knowledge well in individual lessons. Behaviour, relationships and powers of concentration are all good and this enables pupils to take advantage of the opportunities presented to find out more about materials, physical processes and the life of plants and animals.

91. Management of science is satisfactory overall because improvements have been steady since the last inspection. However, there are a number of things that need refining. Monitoring of standards, teaching and the curriculum is low key and is not entirely successful in flagging issues of importance for science. Thus, the fact that the curriculum for older children has been rather ad-hoc through the year is known, but the precise shortcomings could be highlighted and shared more effectively. Assessment also requires



improvement, particularly in the way that the information produced is used to set, share and review targets with the pupils.

92. After a period of inconsistency, science is emerging as a subject where provision is more stable and standards are more uniform. There is every indication that the keen leadership of the head teacher has had good impact on the subject and that science will continue to improve at a steady rate.

## **ART**

93. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and similar by the time pupils left the school. Satisfactory progress was made in the main, but it was sometimes lower than this because of restricted materials being used. Standards in art are now above what would normally be expected throughout the school. Progress is now very good as a result of very good teaching and the variety of tasks that are well supported by very good provision of materials. This is a big improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are given good opportunities to experience a wide range of techniques and media to develop their creative skills. There is good evidence of two-dimensional and three-dimensional work in the portfolio of work and in the displays in school. Systematic use of sketchbooks is not adequately developed. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, benefit from their art making experiences and reach high standards where teaching is most effective.

94. In Key Stage 1, pupils experiment with pattern, texture and shape as they create a two-dimensional picture of the sea. They use a variety of media that they choose for themselves after some detailed discussion with their teacher about the technique of layering paper in order to create their two-dimensional effects. They listen carefully to the teacher and one another before they skilfully begin to create their own pictures. This opportunity is supporting pupils in understanding that art can be used across the curriculum as it is related to their geography work on land use whilst at the same time continuing to develop their use of skills in art. The opportunities to explore other techniques later on in the school include working collaboratively on making stained glass windows, still life work in observational drawings and designing and making patterns through using block printing. This variety of opportunities underpin the standards being achieved.

95. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress. They are constantly being encouraged to improve their skills in making art. The skills are built upon systematically. Once a skill has been learnt it is used again within a different learning situation. For example the skill of perspective used in making their observational drawings of figures is used again when they reproduce figures in clay. Progress is also inter-related to the care with which they are working as a result of their high levels of concentration.

96. Attitudes to art are very positive. Interest and enjoyment levels are high. As a result of the purposefulness in their work they are able to imaginatively combine materials, colour and use cutting and tearing techniques in order to create different effects. They willingly share the good quality resources. Behaviour is good as a result of the good variety of their tasks that sustain the pupils' interest. Their experiences in making art make a good contribution towards pupils' spiritual and social development as well as to their growth in their personal development.

97. Teaching is very good across both key stages. When teaching is particularly effective subject knowledge is secure. The tasks planned by teachers are imaginative and support sustaining pupils' interest. The tasks are well matched to pupils' levels of ability and teachers make sensitive interventions without constraining pupil's creative learning. Art is imaginatively resourced as well with provision of a wide range of materials that means pupils can paint, make collages, use clay and make observational drawings using pencil, crayon and pastels to good effect. Teachers are continually extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of what art means and how useful it is as a form of expressing themselves.

98. Although the subject is well led and managed jointly by the head teacher and a nursery nurse there is a recognised need to update the policy and scheme of work. This recognition is made in the school's rolling programme of policy review and will be carried out in order to meet the needs of Curriculum 2000. The portfolio of work that has been established has been carefully annotated that ensures that learning is being evaluated whilst also assuring continuity and progression in developing art skills. Artwork also supports the creation of a stimulating and attractive learning environment. Pupils understand the value of art because they have made such a good contribution to their learning environment.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. In 1996, standards in design and technology were reported as satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils were ten. Whilst progress in lessons was sound, across time, it was variable as there was unnecessary repetition of work. Teaching quality was satisfactory, although there were weaknesses of subject management as shown by the list of things, such as assessment procedures and a scheme of work, that were not in place. In most respects, this positive picture has been maintained since 1996, but improvement has also been made to consolidate and extend the provision for design and technology.

100. Standards are at the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils age ten show they have attained sound standards. Progress with learning is satisfactory over time and pupils consolidate and extend their skills and knowledge at a consistent rate in all classes.

101. The level of resourcing for design and technology is very good and the accommodation is of high quality. They have both improved much since the last inspection. These two factors have major impact on achievement and progress because pupils are given systematic experiences across all elements of the subject, whether food, textile, wood or plastics technology. Additionally, the curriculum is well planned to give the necessary experiences in planning and designing and evaluation, as well as the more traditional making stage. By the age of ten, pupils make detailed designs, giving clear specifications of materials and methods, they manufacture articles satisfactorily and evaluate them for success and possible improvement. Younger pupils include elements of all these things in their work. Reception pupils make simple plans of model vehicles and construct them from off-cast packaging. The standard of decoration is good and there is good focus on the mechanics of the wheels and axles.

102. Teaching quality is satisfactory through the school and has some strengths. The careful attention to all elements of the design and technology curriculum is one of these. In general, there is a good practical base to the work and teachers have the required subject knowledge and teach the basic skills effectively. Pupils respond well to the opportunities

provided for learning. Behaviour is good, they work well together and put in good effort.

103. Management is good. This is because provision for the subject has been improved by the additions to resources and accommodation mentioned above. The head teacher acknowledges that there is need for a greater level of direct monitoring that includes all staff and assessment requires improvement.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

104. At the time of the last inspection standards were found to be satisfactory and progress was sound at both key stages. Standards are now what can be expected for pupils' ages and progress is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

105. There is clear evidence in pupils' books and in the small number of lessons observed that pupils have opportunities to build skills and knowledge in a systematic way. This is what ensures that progress is good and that pupils are capable of the expected levels of work.

106. Geography is used well to support the development of literacy skills in Key Stage 1. Pupils focus on the physical features of land use in Year 2 through considering a holiday at the seaside. They recognise how the geography of an area affects people's lives. They record their knowledge and understanding of this in different ways that are appropriate for them. Some create a diary over a period of time, others write a letter to a good friend whilst a third group write post cards. All of the approaches make their work more meaningful, especially the group writing the post card who have a facsimile of a real post card to write. The meaningful nature of geography is reinforced in Year 4 when pupils visit a local farm that has a stream running through the fields. Here pupils collect and record evidence of direction and water erosion of banks. In doing these tasks accurate geographical language is used with them and make perceptive observations in consequence. They talk and research well. At the same time skills in observational drawing are also reinforced as they make accurate drawings of places and objects in the field to confirm their understanding of directional placement.

107. Because pupils enjoy the practical nature of their tasks their attitudes to geography are good, They work purposefully whilst showing good levels of concentration. They work at a good pace because they are interested in what they are doing. As the pace is maintained the quality and quantity of their learning is also continued.

108. Geography is taught well across both key stages because teaching is rooted in secure subject knowledge. Work is planned thoroughly. They are well resourced after being introduced clearly to pupils. Open-ended questions are posed to pupils so that they have to think about what they are doing and make well-researched responses. Support is well deployed when it is available so that pupils gain more benefit from interaction with adults. This was particularly important on the field study work.

109. The management of geography is good on the whole, though there is little monitoring against clearly defined criteria. Good use is made of the local area as a practical resource. Good use is made of the budget to provide other geographical resources.

## **HISTORY**

110. At the time of the last inspection standards were satisfactory and progress was sound across both key stages. As at the last inspection there was little opportunity to observe lessons but from the evidence in books and the one observed lesson it is confirmed that standards remain in line with what could be expected whilst progress is good across both key stages.

111. History is made more meaningful at both key stages by the use of the good local area, which has many appropriate historical features such as the footbridge over the river, and the railway, which no longer has a station but trains going through the village regularly. There is also a regular programme of visits made to places such as Hartlebury Castle museum. Visitors into school such as the Viking also ensure understanding of times past. This understanding is generated from the earliest age as pupils make their own time line after their visit to the villages' different sites. In Year 2 pupils' understanding of different ages of buildings is confirmed as they make their own wattle and daub buildings after visiting the local area. Photographs are used as secondary evidence to support pupils understanding of past and present, when for example in Year 3 they study trains as a follow up to their local area visit. The extent of understanding the passage of time is reinforced for Years 4 and 5 pupils as they compile their own project books on the Tudors and World War 2 using their research skills to good effect. Progress made is good as a result of this variety of activities.

112. Attitudes to learning in history are good across both key stages. Pupils seek information with good measures of self-confidence from Key Stage 1 onwards. They sustain their interest well. They use correct historical language when for example they make their own time lint in Year 1 after they have place buildings in the village in chronological order of age. When they have a visitor to tell them about holidays in war time they listen intently and are very well behaved.

113. History is taught well across both key stages. The portfolio of work retained by the school establishes clearly that a good range of historical work is being covered. It is well planned so that learning is based upon previous learning. Good continuity is in place together with good progression. Different levels of ability are suitably covered with extension work for more able pupils and good support being given to pupils with special educational needs. The more able pupils in consequence record in greater detail.

114. Although the portfolio of work is well annotated it also reveals that not enough opportunity is available for the co-ordinator to evaluate and monitor the learning outcomes because there is no attempt at levelling work accurately. At the moment the subject is being temporarily led due to the long-term absence of the co-ordinator and is in a holding position. Resources are good and being well used.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

115. Standards in information technology were reported as below average in the last inspection report. This was largely due to shortages in resources to support work in control technology and modelling activities and, therefore, lack of coverage of all the National Curriculum information technology strands. Teachers' subject knowledge was weak, opportunities to use computers to advantage were missed and the software restricted much computer use to literacy and numeracy work. Assessment was another issue raised in the

report. Now inspectors judge that information technology is a much improved subject and that standards are at the expected level.

116. Provision for information technology has been strengthened in a number of ways, as detailed below. These have all had good impact on standards. Inspectors judge that pupils attain the expected level of knowledge, skill and understanding in information technology at the age of seven and ten. More than this, standards are even across all strands of information technology, so, for example, attainment in control technology is as expected. There is also evidence to show that higher attaining pupils are set challenging tasks and that they rise to meet these expectations. Their use of computers, including the Internet, to research the background to their different topics is particularly effective. The scrutiny of pupils' past work showed that they develop good word processing skills as they pass through the school. Some fine quality work is on display to show how pupils set text in lively and attractive ways using graphics, colour, word-wrap and other word processing features to make their writing come alive. Similar effects are obtained when using spreadsheets to process numerical data into graphs and in the use of graphics packages to produce good quality illustrative materials. In computer control and monitoring, pupils have the expected level of experience and standards are sound.

117. The quality of teaching has improved well since the last inspection and is now satisfactory through the school. Learning support assistants make a very valuable contribution to the teaching of information technology and lend good support to pupils and staff alike. Subject knowledge is sound, and improving. Computer skills and knowledge are taught effectively and the technology is used well to support learning in other subjects, particularly English, mathematics and science.

118. Pupils work hard and behave well. There are times when the ratio of pupils to adults actually mean that quite capable pupils become a little too reliant on staff. This is not a significant shortcoming, but it is one that the school should monitor carefully. In all other respects, pupils' response to learning is good and they build knowledge and skills at a steady rate through the school.

119. Management of information technology is very clearly good. The improvements made to resourcing, including the provision of a high quality and well equipped computer suite, are having a major impact on standards and the quality of teaching. There is a need for more direct monitoring of the subject and assessment needs rationalising into a consistent system across the school. However, the subject has been improved very well since 1997. More use is now made of information technology, standards are rising and there is good potential for the future.

## **MUSIC**

120. At the time of the last inspection standards in music were below expectations, lessons were too long and there was no scheme of work. The provision of an appropriate scheme of work was particularly identified as a key issue for the school. These issues have been addressed appropriately and are no longer causes for concern. The scheme currently used is to be reviewed by the recently appointed co-ordinator in order to plan for Curriculum 2000. Within this review the need to address a more formal evaluation and monitoring of work in music than is currently in place is already recognised.

121. There was no opportunity to observe lessons in Key Stage 2, although evidence was produced of programmes and tapes that indicate pupils' participation in musical concerts in the cluster group of schools and in an in school production of "Hosanna Rock". There is also regular participation in instrumental work led by members of the local authority music team, although this had ceased for the term at the time of the inspection. The combination of these factors indicates that the work at Key Stage 1 is being built upon effectively. In Key Stage 1, standards are in line with what would be expected for pupils' ages. At this key stage pupils join together to sing enthusiastically and tunefully. They concentrate on improving performance together using their voices as a major vehicle of producing successful pitch and dynamics. They add instruments to their singing in rounds as an effective addition to developing their musical knowledge and understanding. They listen to the beat and rhythm that is being created by the teacher's accompaniment and begin to put effort into improving their performance. The pupils' skills in listening and appraising music are much enhanced at this key stage when they are working with the co-ordinator as they show high levels of concentration when listening to "The aquarium" from "Carnival of the Animals". They listen without knowing what the title of the music is and they record perceptively in illustrative or written form what they feel the music is telling them.

122. As a result of this good range of opportunities, progress in music is good across both key stages for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, who are well supported in their learning. Progress is very good in Key Stage 1 when pupils have the opportunity to develop their listening and appraisal skills. They know the difference between using their voices loudly and quietly according to the requirements of the songs. They listen with accuracy to one another as well as their teacher and so make a good contribution to one another's learning.

123. Attitudes to music are good. Apart from their careful listening they work with a good sense of purpose with good levels of concentration. Behaviour is generally good whether they are involved in a large or small group. Their social and personal development is enhanced by their music making together.

124. Teaching is good across both key stages. It is very good when there is specialist teaching by the co-ordinator. Where teaching is most effective tasks are introduced very clearly. Good use is made of correct musical language as music and the composer are valued for pupils by the teacher. Good quality tapes are used as a resource so that pupils have an appropriate stimulus for their learning. Particularly good points are drawn out for pupils in the discussion so that they are always increasing their knowledge and skills in music. Teaching is effective as teachers and support staff work closely together to ensure that maximum benefit is gained from pupils' music making.

125. The subject was well led by the co-ordinator who led staff in producing a policy and provided a commercial scheme of work so that issues could be addressed appropriately after the last inspection. This gave staff confidence to teach music. It continues to be well led by the recently appointed co-ordinator who recognises the need to evaluate and monitor progress closely to ensure continuity and progression in learning. There is a lack of instruments to promote learning of music from other cultures although the resources that are in use are of good quality. They are stored centrally and so are readily accessible to teachers and pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

126. When reporting last time, inspectors judged that standards in physical education were above the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 5. However, this judgement was restricted to gymnastics and dance, the only elements of physical education that were observed. The teaching seen was good, though management was an issue as there was no co-ordinator for the subject. The school has held the strengths reported last time and has addressed the weaknesses effectively.

127. As at the last inspection, only two lessons in physical education were seen. These involved dance and games. Standards in these lessons were satisfactory and pupils were learning well. In addition to dance and games, the planned curriculum includes gymnastics, swimming, athletics and outdoor and adventurous pursuits. It is clear from the planning that pupils have appropriate experiences throughout the year in physical education which allow them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge. There is evidence to show that most pupils achieve the desirable level of swimming proficiency and most can swim 25 metres by the time they leave school.

128. In the lessons observed, pupils worked energetically and there was good focus on the evaluation of performance and the identification of ways to improve. Following this focus, pupils worked well to refine their movements and they met with renewed success.

129. The quality of teaching was good and is clearly satisfactory overall, at least, across the full range of the subject. This is evidenced by the standards in swimming, the good range of extra curricular sporting activities and the results of the friendly competitive netball and football matches played against other local schools. All members of staff, including learning support assistants, have good subject knowledge and they teach with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

130. The management of physical education is satisfactory, although direct monitoring of the work and ways to assess pupils' skills are two aspects that would stand further improvement. The school has a secure base of physical education to meet the demands of the revised curriculum due for introduction later this year.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

131. At the time of the last inspection standards matched the Agreed Syllabus expectations and satisfactory progress was made throughout the school. Standards are still in line with the expectations of the syllabus followed by Worcestershire schools. Provision meets the requirements of this syllabus. Progress is now good across both key stages, and very good now in Year 5 on occasion. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Work is beneficially linked at Key Stage 1 to their personal development and this contributes well to the quality of the personal relationships that support a sense of orderliness in the school. The improvement in progress being made is not yet reflected in the standards as the sample of work shows that progress has been more rapid recently as a result of changes in staff and some of the subsequent approaches to teaching.

132. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn by following a theme which supports them well in developing their understanding clearly. The current theme in Year 1 was focused effectively on the prayer of St. Theresa. The effectiveness of this theme is clear as the pupils are able to use the actions with their hands, feet and eyes that made the prayer more meaningful to them. Their understanding is confirmed as they make sensible contributions to the discussion that are recorded by the teacher. In Year 5 pupils have a very mature debate

upon the meaning of forgiveness as a result of studying passages from St. Luke in the Bible. The debate not only gives clear focus to the elements of forgiveness but also elicits feelings, meanings, values and beliefs from the pupils. The confirmation of their mature approach to the subject could be found in the beginnings of their written recording. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in consequence of these well-chosen tasks. Pupils with special needs receive effective support in their recording but have made commendable contributions to the discussions in order to confirm their understanding.

133. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good across both key stages with some very good attitudes shown currently in Year 5 as they value one another and listen carefully to one another's views in consequence. They respond well and want to find out more as a result of their interest and high levels of concentration. Their personal development and appreciation of others' beliefs and values increases systematically. They build up their knowledge gradually but in doing so they work at a good pace as they sustain their thinking.

134. The quality of teaching is good across both key stages, whilst it has very good features now in Year 4/5. Where teaching is best in Year 4/5 the teacher has planned very thoroughly and made her high expectations clear. The interactive nature of the debate that she encourages is well supported by her good role modelling of listening and responding purposefully to points raised by pupils. She ensures that all views are considered as she distributes questions well and ensures that pupils understand that their views are being sought. In other lessons there is equally good planning that means that teaching is still good with good interaction. However, there is some slackening of pace when there is a lack of good illustrations to support pupils in indicating understanding clearly.

135. The co-ordinator has established an appropriate policy to support the scheme of work provided by the syllabus. Developments have been well managed but there is a lack of opportunity for the co-ordinator to develop her role fully in evaluating and monitoring the subject's achievements systematically. Although resources that are available are good there is a lack of suitable artefacts to give more meaning to some work in religious education, particularly in world religions other than Christianity. The co-ordinator is keen to make further improvement to provision by taking up opportunities to monitor and by increasing resources.