

INSPECTION REPORT

LAMPARD VACHELL SCHOOL

Barnstaple, Devon

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113637

Headteacher: Marie Buckland

Reporting inspector: Michael McDowell
1405

Dates of inspection: 21st and 22nd January, 2002

Inspection number: 194714

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Moderate learning difficulties
Age range of pupils:	6 - 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St. John's Lane, Barnstaple, Devon
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Peter Edwards
Date of previous inspection:	16 th June 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lampard Vachell is a small, day special school for pupils in North Devon who have moderate learning difficulties. There are 65 pupils aged between 7 and 16, of which 40 are boys and 25 are girls. On the same site there is a unit, Acorn Lodge, which offers full-time day education to 7 pupils, 6 boys and 1 girl, aged 11 to 16 who have autistic spectrum disorder. The work of Acorn Lodge is overseen by the governors of Lampard Vachell School and the unit's teacher-in-charge is managed by the school's head teacher. Just over a third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average for schools of this type nationally. The economic circumstances of the pupils' families are varied but a significant number of pupils are drawn from areas where unemployment is high. All the pupils are white and nearly all are from the United Kingdom. The attainment of pupils on entry to both the school and Acorn Lodge is well below the average for their age because of their special educational needs. A significant proportion of pupils enters the school at times other than the usual time of first admission and a smaller but still significant proportion leave at other than the usual time. The school aims to help pupils to reach their potential by providing high quality education, tailored to the individual, in a learning environment that is purposeful and caring. The school also aims to support the re-integration of pupils into mainstream schools and to help prepare them for life after school. Consultation is taking place about changing the nature and age-range of the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Lampard Vachell is a very effective school; pupils achieve standards higher than expected because they are very well taught. The leadership provided by the head teacher is very good and she is strongly supported by the deputy head teacher and those members of staff who have management responsibilities. Very efficient use is made of resources and the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is of very good quality and enables pupils to achieve standards that are higher than expected
- Pupils' personal development and their independence are very effectively promoted so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education or for employment
- Attention to ensuring equality of opportunity, and carefully fostered relationships with mainstream schools and colleges, lead to pupils getting the chance to experience education in mainstream schools and local colleges
- Leadership and management are very effective and have enabled the school to continue to move forward at a time of change
- Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning
- The extensive programme of visits enhances pupils' experiences and stimulates their learning

What could be improved

- The range of externally recognised and accredited qualifications offered to pupils in their final two years at the school.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. Since then improvement has been good. Standards of achievement have improved both in the school and in Acorn Lodge. This is illustrated by the increasing number of pupils who have successfully returned to mainstream education or who receive some of their lessons in mainstream schools and by the increased success achieved by pupils in accredited courses. Assessment, especially in English, mathematics and science is now effective because a systematic and a comprehensive record of pupils' progress is kept and it is used well to help with individual planning and the curriculum. The curriculum is monitored effectively, each pupil receives a balanced range of opportunities and all statutory requirements are now met.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:		by Year 6	by Year 11	
speaking and listening		B	B	
reading		B	B	
writing		B	B	
mathematics		B	B	
personal, social and health education		A	A	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*		A	A	

Key	
very good	A
good	B
satisfactory	C
unsatisfactory	D
poor	E

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

The school has made a start in target setting and sets targets for overall pupil achievement in each year group. These are based on individual records of attainment in English, mathematics and science. At this early stage in the process targets reflect the levels that pupils, based on their previous rate of progress, can be expected to attain. Pupils make a good start in developing their communication skills and because of the high quality of the teaching throughout the school, they continue to make progress at a good rate. Similarly reading and writing skills develop well. By the end of Year 11 almost all pupils gain external accreditation in basic literacy and a high proportion go forward to complete the course and examination for the Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoEA) which is at a higher level. In mathematics, the picture is similar. Pupils build upon the good start they make in the junior classes and by the end of Year 11 they make good practical use of their numeracy skills. Most achieve external accreditation in basic numeracy and a high proportion goes on to complete the coursework and examination for the CoEA. Achievement is good in English and mathematics even though teaching is very good. This is because of the high turnover of pupils, and the fact that more able pupils quickly move on to mainstream schools. Progress in information and communications technology is good and the majority of pupils go on to take the CoEA in information technology with many achieving merits and distinctions. Pupils make very good progress in personal social and health education in which the good programme of classroom teaching is greatly reinforced by the broader opportunities for learning that the school provides. Pupils make very good progress towards the targets set for them at annual reviews and reflected in their individual education plans. These are

frequently attained within the time set.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils work hard in lessons and try their best. They are pleased with what they achieve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. In lessons pupils listen carefully and work well in collaboration with one another. Lunch times and breaks are relaxed and friendly. Pupils' behaviour outside of the school is calm and mannerly and they are very polite to visitors. There has been one exclusion in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils progressively gain in confidence, coming to believe that they can be successful learners as they move through the school. Those with autistic spectrum disorders progress sufficiently to make placement at mainstream school a realistic prospect. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and the adults who teach and support them are excellent.
Attendance	Good. The school's attendance figures compare well with those of similar schools nationally and unauthorised absence is very low for schools of this kind.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:		Years 2 – 6	Years 7 – 11	
Quality of teaching		Very good	Very good	

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

Teaching is very good. The majority of lessons observed, across the age range, were very good and most of the remainder were good. None of the lessons observed was unsatisfactory. Teaching in English in the primary classes is firmly founded on a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils start with limited communication skills but through skilled teaching, they develop their speaking and listening rapidly. Good planning that takes account of pupils' individual learning needs underpins the teaching of literacy. This enables most pupils to become effective readers and writers by the time they leave school. Teaching in mathematics is very effective. Over time pupils are enabled, by well-targeted and carefully structured lessons, to make practical use of the mathematics they have been taught. Teaching in science is of high quality and encourages pupils to develop an investigative approach and test out their own ideas. Pupils derive great benefit from the high quality teaching in personal social and health education. There is good subject expertise in many areas and pupils benefit from being taught by teachers who are confident about what they want to achieve through their lessons. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the special educational needs of their pupils is very good. The pace of lessons is good and time is used fully. Lessons are challenging in many cases because the expectations of teachers are high. Pupils are aware of their individual targets and this encourages them to try hard. Older pupils work with a good degree of independence and in some cases, for example in their outdoor and adventurous activities, their level of independence is outstanding.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The pupils are given a broad range of learning opportunities and the curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the excellent programme of residential and day visits and by the strong links the school has developed with mainstream schools and local colleges. The school makes good additional provision for pupils who have particular difficulties in acquiring literacy skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Within the curriculum, particularly in music, art, religious, personal, social and health and physical education and in assemblies pupils have opportunities to experience awe, show aesthetic appreciation and reflect on their experiences. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils understanding the principles that underlie right and wrong on becoming good members of a community. Through art, music, religious education and many visits, cultural understanding is broadened and deepened.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Appropriate procedures for child protection are in place and the school takes measures to ensure the safety of its pupils. Their learning and behaviour are monitored and assessed well.

The school works very effectively with parents who express a strong measure of confidence in the provision it makes for their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good. The head teacher is very clear about the educational purpose and direction of the school. Through strong leadership she has ensured that it continues to improve and move forward even though its future role is uncertain. Very good support is given by those in senior management and with curriculum leadership responsibilities.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governors are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They give strong support and their oversight is thorough.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has made a start in target setting so that data by which it judges the performance of its pupils is being gathered. A performance management strategy is in place that enables the achievements of the head teacher and the deputy to be evaluated against targets set for them. Teachers each have performance targets that are regularly reviewed. This has improved teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. By careful planning, the school has adapted its accommodation so that curriculum needs can be better met. The employment of part-time, subject specialist, teachers has improved the quality of teaching and learning. Resources are well used to support the extensive programme of visits that does much to encourage pupils' personal development. There have been judicious improvements in the provision of computers to support the successful developments in the teaching of ICT. In all this, the school has operated within the principles of ensuring value for money although it does not yet compare itself with other schools nationally.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school is well led and managed and It works closely with parents. They feel comfortable approaching the school with problems or questions• They are kept well informed about their children's progress• Their children like school, do well there and are becoming more responsible and mature• The school's expectations of what their children can achieve are high and teaching is of good quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework that is set

Inspectors' findings support the positive views expressed by parents. The school has clear procedures for setting homework and the inspectors found that these were appropriate. Parents are encouraged to discuss the amount of homework given with teachers if they find it to be too much or too little.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Teaching is of very good quality and enables pupils to achieve standards that are higher than expected

1. Pupils in Lampard Vachell and Acorn Lodge expect to succeed in their lessons. They achieve well in English and mathematics and very well in physical education and information and communication technology. This is because of high quality teaching that takes good account of pupils' individual needs. Teachers are very well informed about the learning characteristics of their pupils and the requirements of the subjects they teach. They plan effectively so that time in lessons is best used and pupils have good opportunities to continue to make progress.

2. There are high expectations of pupils. It is assumed that in the classroom they will concentrate and try their best. Teachers plan, interesting lessons that make it easier for pupils to keep their minds on their work. Good use is made of simple resources, such as individual whiteboards to ensure that all pupils take a full part in questions and answer sessions.

3. Learning support assistants are used imaginatively, as, for example, when they play the part of a learner who the pupils must instruct.

4. Teaching in English leads to effective learning. Teachers plan their lessons for 7 to 11-year-old pupils in line with the National Literacy Strategy. They adapt it very well to meet the needs of pupils who learn more slowly. Clear learning objectives are set and shared with the pupils so they are in no doubt about what they should do. There is a good direct approach to reading and spelling. The sounds made by letters are rehearsed in group sessions. As a consequence, by the time they are 11, pupils know their letters, are familiar with vowels and consonants and put them together to form three letter words. They also know the more common combinations of consonants, such as "st", "sh" and "sw", and use these correctly in forming and spelling words such as "stop". Teachers use effective methods in sessions on letter sounds and spellings. The group is taught together by the teacher to ensure that the pace and purpose of the lesson are maintained and all pupils are required to respond to questions by making use of their individual whiteboards. "Big books" are used very well to develop reading, speaking and listening. Pupils pay excellent attention and listen intently during "Big book" sessions. They are highly motivated to succeed.

5. Pupils acquire the vocabulary necessary to talk about books. They know the meaning of "author", "illustrator" and "title". They read aloud confidently, individually and as a class, and they recognise the majority of words in the text. When new words are encountered, they use their phonic skills to sound them out and pronounce them. This is done very successfully and, it was noted that difficult words such as "gnawed" were read in this way. Pupils understand the stories they read and hear and teachers skilfully lead them to an understanding of the moral when fables are read. This is good practice that is indicative of the strong emphasis on moral and social development that permeates much of the school's work.

6. Teachers in the junior classes have high expectations of what their pupils will achieve. In writing sessions, work that is not up to standard is not accepted, but praise is given when work is good and is done correctly. From the earliest stages, an emphasis is placed on correct punctuation and spelling. Pupils who are in need of additional support are correctly

identified and the resources of the classroom, including the valuable contributions of the special support assistants, are used to help these individuals to achieve as much as they can.

7. By the age of 16, pupils have acquired sufficient literacy skill to support independence. In addition to their work related to literature, they use their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in practical situations. For example, they understand the requirements of official forms and can fill them in. In a very good lesson about applying for a job, pupils contributed their ideas. They recognised the need for a job application form to be completed flawlessly and suggested how this could be done by using drafting strategies. They discussed sources of information about their achievements and accomplishments that could be included on the form. With the sensitive and skilful prompting of the teacher, they gained insight into the purpose of the questions on the form and this prepared them to offer the most relevant answers.

8. Pupils aged 7 to 11 make a bright start in mathematics. Teachers are well versed in the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and use it effectively. The importance of mental mathematics is recognised and it is given sufficient prominence in lively, well conducted sessions. Pupils who are aged 7 to 11 show awareness of number, counting skills and accuracy in adding single digit numbers. Teachers lead these sessions with assurance and waste no time. In the best lessons, all pupils make contributions, answering questions that are at the appropriate level. They develop their understanding quickly. The older pupils are aware of place value and they divide multi digit numbers into hundreds, ten and units. When they measure they choose the appropriate tool - a ruler or a tape, by estimating the length of the object to be measured. They do this well.

9. By the time they are 16, pupils make confident practical use of mathematics. Most have successfully undertaken and passed Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, (AQA), basic numeracy tests at Levels 1 and 2. They are moving forward to take the Certificate of Educational Achievement, (CoEA), of the Welsh Examinations Board with every prospect of success. Teachers make the mathematics work relevant. It is well linked to other important school activities such as the well-developed programme for outdoor and adventurous activities. In a very good lesson on time and timetables, the teacher's effective planning was rewarded by the commitment of the pupils to their task and the real gains in learning that took place. Pupils were grouped so that all could focus on the teacher and the use of individual white boards, on which pupils answered the questions, ensured that the teacher was fully aware of the success of each pupil. A good feature was the open discussion that arose when answers were in apparent conflict. From these, pupils broadened their understanding of, for example, the terminology of time. By the end of the session, pupils were familiar with timetable notation in the 24-hour and 12-hour modes and were able to convert between these.

10. Teaching in physical education is of very high quality. The strong emphasis on outdoor and adventurous activities enables pupils to become as independent as possible. A remarkable outcome of the very good teaching and learning in physical education has been the success of pupils from the school in undertaking and completing the Ten Tors challenge. In 2000, the team of six pupils from Lampard Vachell became the first group from a special school to enter and complete the event.

11. Across the broad range of the curriculum, the teaching of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder at Acorn Lodge is very successful. Pupils who were previously unable to respond to education have become effective learners who take part sensibly in lessons both in Acorn Lodge and in neighbouring mainstream schools.

12. Teaching in art is of high quality. The recently introduced art lessons taught by a specialist with very good understanding of the subject requirements, has greatly improved the quality of work in art throughout the school. Lessons capture the pupils' imagination, enable them to refine their visual discrimination and give them practical opportunities to make art using a variety of media. In the relatively short time, that specialist teaching has been provided, pupils have come to know and appreciate the work of a range of artists. They have also developed the confidence and ability to evaluate their own work and that of others. Although the school does not enter its pupils for accredited courses in art, 4 pupils have been entered for the General Certificate of Secondary Education in art at a local secondary school that they attend part-time.

13. As a result of good teaching, pupils have gained a wide range of useable skills in information and communication technology. They use a broad range of equipment with confidence. Many are skilled in using the digital camera. Pupils have access to information technology through lunchtime clubs that greatly stimulate their interest. Good use is made of e-mail to link with other schools.

14. Teaching in personal, social and health education is of high quality. Within the broad scope of the programme there is good careers education that is founded on the teacher's very good knowledge of the pupils' characteristics and needs. Pupils are given very direct guidance about self-presentation. Very good use is made of video material to teach aspects of parenthood. The direct impact of a recording of childbirth was palpable among the 16-year old pupils who watched it and teachers built very sensitively and effectively on this.

Pupils' personal development and their independence are very effectively promoted so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education or to employment

15. The school gives pupils the chance to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in real life situations. Consequently by the age of 16, most scan a newspaper for information, read and understand the implications of advertisements, fill in application forms and make good use of timetables and listings. They plan journeys by public transport, schedule their viewing of television, estimate the cost of goods and shop effectively for daily necessities. Through good opportunities provided by the school, pupils are users of information and communication technology. Some are sufficiently confident to visit Internet cafes to send and receive e-mail and to search for information.

16. Pupils are given the opportunity to broaden their awareness and concern for others by membership of the student council. The extensive opportunities that the school offers all its pupils to travel within and beyond the local area serve to add to their experiences and self-reliance. A most telling illustration is the school's involvement in the demanding Ten Tors Challenge. In May 2000, as an extension of its very successful programme of outdoor and adventurous activities, the school entered a team of six pupils in this 35 mile, 24 hour cross-country trek. Pupils successfully completed it. This year a team will be entered and a further group will take part in a similar but less demanding walk along the same route. The essential feature of the Ten Tors Challenge is that those taking part do so without assistance. They must plan their route, read maps accurately in the field, share the tasks and responsibilities between the members of the group, and help one another. The trek involves an overnight bivouac and food preparation. Twelve pupils in Years 9 to 11 are sufficiently independent to manage these tasks.

17. A further expression of independence is shown in Years 10 and 11, where pupils aged 14 to 16 attend local secondary schools for part of their education. Some are sufficiently self-confident to work alongside mainstream pupils in examination classes. Pupils aged 16,

attend a local college for one morning a week and they make their way independently to and from the college.

18. Within the school, pupils relate to one another very well. They work together and listen to each other when work is being discussed or questions are being answered. In assemblies, they are eager to take part and make their contributions and they sing with unselfconscious enjoyment. They are aware of the feelings of others and they are helpful to visitors to the school.

19. Relationships between pupils and the adults who teach and support them are very good. This makes it possible for pupils to receive frank and specific guidance that is especially effective when pupils are being prepared to take part in work experience or attend external interviews. The school co-ordinates an extensive work-experience programme that carefully matches the aptitudes and inclinations of pupils to the experience available. Where it is beneficial, this is extended. Because of the high quality of the teaching they receive, pupils become thoughtful and self-evaluative. They discuss the things they are good at and enjoy and they understand that this information is helpful to others in making sensible job choices.

20. Almost all of those leaving Lampard Vachell at the age of 16 go on to attend courses at the local college. They are familiar with it because of their weekly visits during their final year. In addition, they are known to college staff and this makes it easier to meet their needs effectively.

21. There is strong co-operation between the school and the careers service, Connexions. The adviser visits regularly and attends the transitional reviews of pupils in Year 9. Pupils are helped to consider their options for when they leave school and the adviser makes effective contacts with parents by, for example, attending the Year 10 parents' evening. Oversight of pupils is maintained until they have left school.

22. All these arrangements enable pupils to comfortably and confidently move on from school to college, or sometimes to employment.

Attention to ensuring equality of opportunity, and carefully fostered relationships with mainstream schools and colleges, lead to pupils getting the chance to experience education in mainstream schools and local colleges

23. The school makes very effective use of the good links it has developed with mainstream education to enable all pupils at some stage to have part of their education in a local college. In addition to this, it ensures that pupils get chances to broaden their learning and social experience in local schools. In the past two years, five pupils from Lampard Vachell and Acorn Lodge transferred permanently to mainstream education. Currently four pupils attend a local school part-time for some of their lessons. Acorn Lodge has had notable recent success in helping pupils to attend school regularly, when, because of their difficulties, this had previously been a problem. There is a very strong supportive network with Lampard Vachell at its centre that moves this successful re-integration programme. Senior staff members from schools and colleges, who have responsibility for inclusion, are regular visitors to the school and they come to be known by the pupils. The good relationships that result from this make it easier to arrange for the placement of pupils in mainstream schools where appropriate.

24. Within the school, all pupils have equal access to what is offered. Those with autistic spectrum disorder who attend Acorn Lodge take part in school assemblies and in the range of adventurous outdoor activities and school visits. Both boys and girls are involved in the

Ten Tors Challenge.

Leadership and management are very effective and have enabled the school to continue to move forward at a time of change

25. The school is very well led and staff morale is high. Those who work in the school share with the head teacher and senior managers a strong commitment to the educational aims of the school. Over the five years since it was last inspected, improvements have been made to the quality of education, accommodation and resources for learning. Specific impetus has been given to a number of initiatives that have been of great benefit to the pupils. Links with schools and colleges have been developed and opportunities for inclusion by re-integration into mainstream schools have improved. A wide-ranging programme that broadens pupils' educational and social experience has gradually been put in place. This programme ensures, by careful management, that all pupils have extensive opportunities for visits and residential courses.

26. The quality of teaching has been significantly improved by employing teachers with specialist subject knowledge. Standards in information and communication technology, art, French and science have risen as a result.

27. All this has been achieved within a framework of careful financial management and against a background of declining pupil numbers. More pertinently, development has continued even though the future of the school is uncertain. It has been known for some time that re-organisation of special education in the county might change the character and age-range of the school. Consultation about proposals to re-designate the school has begun. However, staff have not lost their sense of purpose because the head teacher has taken care to keep the school moving forward. New requirements and initiatives, such as the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, have been embraced and adapted to meet pupils' needs. A performance management policy has been put in place to ensure that teaching and learning are kept under review. Whole school targets for pupil performance have been set. Because of the effectiveness of the leadership provided, there is a positive working atmosphere. All staff show pride in the school's accomplishments and make commitments of time and energy well beyond what is contractually required.

Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning

28. Pupils of all ages listen carefully in lessons, try very hard in the tasks that are set, enjoy what they do and take a great deal of pride in what they accomplish. They recall the special times that they have enjoyed, including exciting visits and adventurous activities, and share their pleasure in these with others and visitors to the school. In the lessons observed, behaviour was very good as pupils responded to the clear expectations of their teachers. In certain subjects, for example, art, pupils in the secondary classes showed a mature and sensible attitude in evaluating their own work and that of others. Similarly in an information and communication technology lesson for 14-year-olds, where "PowerPoint" presentations were being shared, comment on the strengths and weaknesses of each presentation showed a high degree of maturity.

29. Pupils in Acorn Lodge have gained confidence in those who teach and support them and take part purposefully in lessons contributing their ideas freely.

30. There are clear policies for promoting good behaviour and for preventing bullying. These are embodied in the Code of Conduct that operates in the school. Rewards are given to encourage good behaviour and pupils enjoy the opportunity to earn certificates and stickers for their good efforts and pleasant attitudes. Sanctions are temperate and appropriate. They

may involve limiting pupils' access to break-time or educational visits, but in practice, a verbal reprimand is the most likely sanction. Where pupils need such support, and some have emotional and behavioural difficulties, individual behaviour programmes are put in place. The success of the school in promoting discipline and good behaviour is seen not only in the very orderly and happy atmosphere that prevails in lessons, but also in the sensible way that pupils behave when going to lessons or when they are out of the school on visits.

31. Parents who made their views of the school known were particularly pleased with the quality of behaviour that they saw as being helpful in enabling vulnerable children to settle in quickly and benefit from the school. One parent recalled that his son, who has previously been put off going to school by threatening and oppressive behaviour of other pupils, said of Lampard Vachell - "It's a school, but it's safe, like being at home". Another wrote to say that teachers manage behaviour that is sometimes difficult well and "they never seem cross".

32. The sanction of exclusion needs to be used very rarely. There has been only one exclusion in the last three years.

33. The head teacher is very prominent in overseeing the conduct of pupils outside of the classrooms at break-time and at lunchtime. Teachers spend part of their lunch-break eating with their class and helping to give them a good social experience. These and similar efforts by all adults in the school have a positive effect on the pupils resulting in attitudes and behaviour that are much better than the average.

The extensive programme of visits enhances pupils' life experiences and stimulates their learning

34. The school is strongly committed to the aim of extending, as far as possible, the opportunities for visiting places that contrast with pupils' home area or which capture interest and stimulate imagination. To make such opportunities frequent and open to all, the school cuts down the cost by carefully planned strategies, such as pre-cooking the food to be used on residential journeys. Doing this also provides additional learning opportunities for those pupils who help to plan the meals, buy the food, and prepare and cook it. Sources of funding, including voluntary contributions, money from fund-raising events and grants from the national Lottery are found and are very well used. The whole school plays a part in making this prominent area of its work successful. In addition, governors give of their time to accompany some visits.

35. The school places a major emphasis on visits and residential courses because it believes that such opportunities increase pupils' independence, confidence, problem solving skills and understanding of the world. Residentials in particular offer very valuable opportunities to develop positive relationships between adults and pupils. On the evidence of observed pupil performance and behaviour, there are real benefits. For example, pupils relate very well to adults and to each other.

36. Some of the visits that pupils undertake are compulsory because they are related to the curriculum. These include going to local churches and places of worship. There are also optional visits, such as a residential course in North Wales. Some, who have particular relationship difficulties, are singled out for special opportunities. For example, a small group with social integration difficulties was chosen to attend a surfing weekend in Newquay where, through the success they experienced, they blossomed into more confident and sociable children.

37. A visit to Exeter for pupils of secondary age gave pupils a valuable experience of an urban environment. Visits to the Eden Project stimulated excellent artwork and interest in the environment.

38. Pupils who had visited London, had used the Underground, taken part in night walks and eaten in a restaurant and they returned with greatly increased levels of confidence. This had spin-offs for their schoolwork and there were notable improvements in their use of language, and their writing and drawing skills.

39. Parents said that their children's memories of residential visits were very strong and that they could recall and continue to learn from these experiences more readily than they could recall and learn from lessons,

40. The outdoor and adventurous activities programme continues throughout the year. Conditions on the winter walking trip to North Wales are challenging. Pupils are called on to be helpful to one another in these circumstances and the experience of living in a hostel gives a boost to pupils' social skills. The programme focuses on using maps and compasses, camping and fell walking. It leads to demonstrable gains in the pupils' independence. As a result of this and the broad range of other out-of-school experiences that they enjoy, pupils have greatly increased knowledge of the world around them.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The range of externally recognised and accredited qualifications offered to pupils in their final two years at the school.

41. In 2001, 10 pupils aged 16 were entered for externally accredited qualifications. They all passed the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, (AQA), achievement tests in literacy. Three pupils gained passes at level 1 and seven at level 2. In numeracy, half of them passed the AQA achievement tests at level 1 and half at level 2.

42. All pupils undertook the module on information technology within the National Skills Profile, (essential skills), validated by the Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts examination board, (OCR). They achieved success at grades 1, 2 and 3.

43. All pupils who entered for the Basic Hygiene Course of the Institute of Environmental health, successfully completed it.

44. A 16-year-old pupil at Acorn Lodge gained General Certificate of Secondary Education, (GCSE), passes in English, mathematics and general studies.

45. In addition, a number of pupils gained the Young Life Saver Award from the Saint John's Ambulance Association and the Royal Life Saving Society's award for "Saving a baby's life".

46. In the current year, pupils in their last year in school are following courses that are more demanding for the Certificate of Educational Achievement in English and mathematics validated by the Welsh Examinations Board. A few pupils who are able to do so attend part-time at a local secondary school where they plan to take GCSE in art.

47. While it is creditable that all pupils leave school with some externally validated qualifications, more could be done. Because of the very good systematic grounding they receive in literacy and numeracy, pupils are generally well placed to use these skills across a wide range of subjects. For example, the good functional grasp of number, simple data

presentation and interpretation equips a number of pupils to attempt the Certificate of Educational Achievement in science and geography. Work in geography would be strongly supported by the outdoor pursuits that feature at the school, including orienteering. In art, there is high quality teaching and good provision. The pupils are evidently benefiting from this, as the rapid development in their knowledge of art and their observation, drawing and making skills clearly show. For those pupils who achieve more highly than others and are the most confident, partial integration into mainstream schools is feasible and there they have a chance to enter examinations in subjects where Lampard Vachell does not provide this opportunity.

48. It would be in the interests of all pupils and would further strengthen the equal access to the opportunities the school tries to offer, if in the last two years of schooling a wider range of accredited courses was available. This should not be done to the detriment of the existing strengths of the school's provision for these pupils, including their good careers, work experience and college links programmes. The pursuit of accredited courses in a broader range of subjects would make work in those subjects more meaningful and goal directed. Many of the present courses do not lead to awards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. In order to continue to improve and to make sure that all pupils have the best possible learning opportunities, the governors, the head teacher and staff should broaden the range of externally accredited qualifications offered to pupils in their final two years in the school. (Paragraphs 47 and 48).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		11	7	2			
Percentage		55	35	10			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll (including Acorn Lodge)	72
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	24

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	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete 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	72
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	9
Average class size	10.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y3 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	264.5

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	469,145
Total expenditure	455,299
Expenditure per pupil	6,413
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,183
Balance carried forward to next year	25,029

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	71
Number of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	32	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	35	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	49	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	41	14	3	5
The teaching is good.	73	24	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	30	0	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	16	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	30	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	73	22	3	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	84	16	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	30	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	14	5	3	11

Note: Percentage responses do not always add up to one hundred percent because respondents sometimes leave answer boxes blank, rather than ticking "Don't know".