

# Linden Lodge School

Linden Lodge School, 61 Princes Way, London SW19 6JB

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

This residential special school is based in Wandsworth and is part of Southfields Academy Trust. The school provides education and residential provision for disabled children, including those who are severely sight impaired, multi-disabled visually and hearing impaired, and those with profound physical and multiple learning difficulties, including sensory and communication difficulties. All students have an education, health and care plan.

The school has 18 full-time residential places. Children can stay for up to 4 nights a week. The residential accommodation is provided in a separate house, which is situated in the school grounds. At the time of the inspection, the school had 153 students on roll, 13 of them accessing the residential provision.

The head of residential has an appropriate qualification and has been in post since 21 November 2022.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

### Inspection dates: 20 to 22 January 2026

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

**Date of last inspection:** 3 February 2025

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Staff enable children to make exceptional progress in all aspects of their lives. The practice of staff ensures that children with the most complex needs are supported to flourish and empowered to become independent. Children's confidence and self-esteem have significantly improved, and many develop lifelong friendships with their peers and their families.

The voice of the child is strong at the residential provision. Children feel listened to and know that their opinions are valued. This has a positive impact on their engagement and communication skills.

Parents and social workers talked about children's excellent progress and the invaluable experience that they get from staying at the residential provision. For some children, their number of stays have been increased due to the progress being made since joining residential. Many children move to their preferred college to pursue their interests and remain in contact with their peers and staff.

Staff help parents to understand their children's needs through training and individual sessions to ensure that there is consistency at home. One parent said, 'I would not have managed at home without the staff. We don't tell them enough how excellent staff are.' Staff are patient and nurturing when working with children.

Staff have developed excellent relationships with children and understand their individual communication needs. Staff understand the barriers children experience when trying to follow daily routines and having to process new information. The school is trialling new innovations aimed at supporting staff to have a better understanding of the adaptations that children need to access the world in which they live. For example, the school is part of the curriculum research group, creating resources for staff training such as the MakeReal mixed virtual reality headset. This enhances staff awareness of the experience of visually impaired children and helps staff to be more empathetic towards children's needs and promote inclusion.

Staff have created a highly supportive and nurturing environment. Children speak highly about their residential experience. Children have access to an environment that is highly adapted to meet their needs, such as using voice recognition devices to perform individual tasks. All information displayed in the residential provision is accessible to all children, using appropriate communication methods to increase accessibility and inclusion. Staff work with parents to ensure that children have the same adaptations at home, to increase their independence when away from school.

Children have opportunities to enjoy a wide range of activities. They are supported to choose activities that they like, such as swimming, Scouts, yoga, karaoke and music.

They have a choice of clubs to attend, such as homework, cooking and photography clubs. Children enjoy a range of community activities such as going shopping, using public transport. They recently visited a local football stadium and enjoyed exclusive access to high-profile seats. . This enhances children's experiences and supports their learning and development.

Children's care plans are individual to them and tell a story of their journey. There are excellent relationships between the residential staff and the school staff. They work as a team in setting individual learning goals, which are reviewed regularly. Excellent joint working between the residential and education teams ensures that all staff have up-to-date information about children's current needs. This supports consistency and helps children to make excellent progress when they stay.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

Staff show an excellent understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures. They know children well and understand their individual vulnerabilities and how they communicate. Staff respond effectively to children's emotional and behavioural needs through attentiveness and proactive support when required. They work well with other teams, such as the behavioural team, to ensure that children receive expert care that is tailored to their individual needs.

The school has a strong safeguarding leadership team, which includes the head of care. Weekly safeguarding meetings ensure that staff are aware of any emerging concerns. The safeguarding leadership team makes sure that clear safeguarding strategies are agreed and put into practice, and that their impact on children's safety is monitored and reviewed. The school's culture of transparency is a strong factor in safeguarding children. Staff share information appropriately and work very well with external professionals.

Parents and external professionals were confident that children are safe when attending the residential provision. There have been no major incidents of any kind since the last inspection. All low-level incidents are monitored and discussed in safeguarding meetings to ensure any changing behaviours are monitored and clear strategies are in place to manage risks.

Residential staff work closely with their colleagues across the school to safeguard children and promote their welfare. The whole-school approach to safeguarding children results in their enhanced safety. There are robust handovers between residential and the school to ensure that any changing behaviours are well understood by the whole team, to keep children safe.

Staff know children very well and can spot the early warning signs if children are struggling. They see changes in behaviour as indicators of underlying concerns. Staff are inquisitive and professionally curious when seeking to understand children's complex needs. Staff have created an environment that is free from bullying,

harassment and intimidation. They spend time reflecting with children when they have struggled emotionally and support children to understand their behaviours and the impact they can have on themselves and others.

Staff receive regular training on a wide range of safeguarding topics. They have excellent understanding of children's vulnerabilities and regularly review each child's plans with teams in school, such as the behavioural, therapy and nursing teams. This ensures that any signs of risk are identified early and that proactive steps are taken swiftly to minimise any risks.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

School leaders and managers are exceptional in the way they approach their work with children in this school. They know children very well and carefully monitor their progress. For example, the co-headteacher responsible for the residential provision visits daily and reviews all children's assessments.

The residential service is managed exceptionally well. The head of residential provision has significant managerial experience and an in-depth knowledge of the service. The head of care is well supported by the co-headteacher, who maintains effective oversight of the residential provision. School leaders and managers work well with other residential provisions and share expertise through networks and partnerships. The school is committed to improving outcomes for children with sensory needs.

Leaders and managers know the provision's strengths and weaknesses well and work well with external partners, including families. They have effective oversight of all aspects of the daily running of the residential provision and the care that children receive. The systems for monitoring the quality of care are highly effective. Leaders and managers regularly review and analyse how the provision is performing and promote a culture where children and their happiness are central to the development of the residential experience. There is a culture of continued learning and improvement to enhance children's experiences.

The excellent leadership team is providing a clear moral direction. Diversity, equality and inclusion are promoted exceptionally well. There is a culture of high respect and differing views and individual needs are valued. Children develop a strong sense of being part of the residential community and many talked about their joy in making friends with their peers and learning about different cultures.

Staff said they feel well supported by the school's leaders and managers. They speak very positively about working at the school and the excellent support they receive from managers. Staff are passionate about the support they offer to the children in their care and know them very well. The head of care provides a supportive environment where staff can reflect on their practice and has developed a culture that fosters mutual support and respect for the staff. Managers offer exceptional

training to ensure that children are looked after by knowledgeable and well-informed staff.

The school's governors maintain strong oversight of the residential provision, which is discussed at the regular governors' meetings. The governor with responsibility for the residential provision visits regularly and knows children and staff very well. The school's independent visitor contributes to the school's rigorous quality assurance processes and managers respond well to any recommendations made following these visits.

School leaders and managers have excellent connections with local charities. As a result, the managers have secured additional resources for the school. For example, one charity is supporting the residential provision to develop an adapted cinema room that all children can enjoy, to improve their experience when they stay.

No recommendations have been made following this inspection.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Residential special school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC010255

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Sarah Norris and Monika Gaweda

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector

Jo Tarbie, Social Care Inspector

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