



## Standard 3 Visit

<b>Name of Service</b>	<b>Linden Lodge School</b>
<b>Date of previous visit</b>	<b>04/12/2023</b>
<b>Date of this visit</b>	<b>25/01/2024</b>
<b>Standard 3 Visitor</b>	<b>Mark Goode</b>
<b>Time of visit</b>	<b>14.00</b>
<b>Visit Supported by</b>	<b>Danny Sinclair – Head of Residential</b> <b>Vicky Watson – Deputy Residential Childcare Manager</b> <b>Sarah Norris – Co-Headteacher responsible for Residential</b>

### About the Independent Visitor

Visiting the residential provision today is Mark Goode. Mark has worked in the Education sector for the past 24 years, leading in multiple schools and alternative providers with experience as both Headteacher and Executive Headteacher. Mark spent time as one of Her Majesty's Inspectors with OFSTED. Mark is experienced in leading bespoke education covering ages 4 to 19 across the full academic range for pupils with wide-ranging complex additional, special and health needs. Mark's strong track-record of inspection processes has helped organisations with low ratings, as well as both 'Good' and 'Outstanding' ratings. Mark undertakes visits on behalf of Platinum Care Consultancy in a number of residential School settings. These include settings designated for care and education of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties, sensory impairment, physical disabilities and health conditions.

## Standard 3 Visits

**INTRODUCTION: Standard 3 - Monitoring by Independent Visitors (as of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022).**

**3.1 The Governing Body, trustees, or proprietor of the school appoint a representative who is independent of the leadership and management of the school to visit the residential provision six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. The representative is vetted in line with the school's safe recruitment policy, in accordance with the safer recruitment requirements set out in Keeping children safe in education, and has the skills and authority to effectively carry out this role**

**3.2 Monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include:**

- **conversations with children, the senior management team and staff;**
- **conversations with social workers where relevant;**
- **conversations with parents/carers where relevant;**
- **checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, bullying, restraint (including restrictive interventions), risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children including in relation to residential provision;**
- **evaluation of the quality of the provision and effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded;**
- **Assessment of the suitability and physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the residential provision and the external environment.**

**3.3 Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the Headteacher (or school equivalent) and where applicable the Governing Body, trust, or proprietor.**

- **Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body) within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary. The Governing Body, trustees, or proprietor of the school should record a formal response to each written report.**
- **Monitoring reports and formal responses should be retained by the school and made available during an inspection and, on request, shared with any placing authorities and with the local authority where the school is located.**

**3.4 The Headteacher (or school equivalent), Governing Body, trustees, or proprietor carry out, and record in writing, once each year: a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for residential pupils, in relation to:**

- **its Statement of Purpose;**
- **its staffing policy;**
- **the placement plans for individual children; and**
- **an internal assessment of its compliance with these standards and**
- **actions it will undertake to ensure compliance.**

**There is also an intention to review other thematic areas in discussion with the school:**

- **The evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded.**
- **An assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture, and equipment of the School.**

**During visits opportunities are also taken to:**

- **Provide opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet me (in private if they wish).**
- **Carry out observations of the care provided, or systems being used.**

### Introduction and Context for this visit

Linden Lodge is a day and residential Special Needs School for pupils with Vision and Sensory Impairment. It occupies a 3-acre campus close to the centre of London and has a range of specialist departments. The school roll has not changed significantly since my last visit.

Upon arrival for this Standard 3 visit, I was once again greeted by the three Residential Leaders who informed me that there had now been confirmation of the recent OFSTED report, and that publication was imminent. The process was at fact checking stage and that the outcome was extremely pleasing overall. The leaders also showed me a letter that had been received from Wandsworth Borough Council that congratulated and recognised the work that has gone into the development of the residential service in recent months and years.

The leaders shared a copy of the report, and whilst the publication date has not yet been reached, and therefore it would not be appropriate for me to state any rating, it confirms the highest of standards of care and leadership are in place in the residential service at Linden Lodge, and for this the whole staff team have my congratulations.

In terms of the context of the residential setup, I was informed that there have been no changes to the residential cohort since my last visit, and that staffing is stable. There is a new boarder due to start soon, and I have covered advance work that has taken place in the consultations section of this report, as well as speaking to a parent related to the residential service in general, but also with a focus on the next steps planning for their child.

During this visit I spent time with all three leaders together, conducted the mandatory checks alongside the Head of Residential, undertook a consultation with the parent of a boarder, and sought to arrange a conversation with the Independent Person although this was not possible and has been moved into term 4. As well as this, I spent time in all parts of the residential buildings meeting with staff and residents to catch up on events and share in their time.

### Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and Verification by Independent Visitor
<p><b><u>Leadership and Management - Next Steps</u></b> For the residential leaders to complete the SCCIF audit against robust evidence as discussed in this visit. Then to incorporate feedback from the recent OFSTED visit into the plans that grow out of this process.</p>	<p><b><u>Response to last visit</u></b> The Head of Residential will show Mark on his next visit the action plan and SCCIF and NMS with a RAG rating to identify any areas that require improvement.</p> <p><b><u>Verification in this Visit</u></b> The Head of Residential confirmed and shared that the SCCIF audit is currently undergoing a full RAG rating and has a clear focus on the next steps that are needed following the recent successful OFSTED Inspection. This is confirmed as partially complete and will be available in term 4, by which time the inspection report will have been published.</p>
<p><b><u>Action plans for Building Developments</u></b> For the action plan to continue being worked upon to maintain and improve the buildings.</p>	<p><b><u>Response to last visit</u></b> Updated action plan will show progress with building works and improved environment.</p> <p><b><u>Verification in this Visit:</u></b> This visit saw us cover the fact that the OFSTED Inspection has reaffirmed the focus upon the building works as a priority moving forward. There are a number of areas under adaptation, (dignity preservation has seen extra privacy screens brought in for all, irrespective of sighted status), and I was informed of imminent decisions over the next steps owing to a donation</p>

	being received. I have added more details in the Premises section of this report.
<p><b>Other leadership developments</b> For the Residential Leaders to continue the development of the Independence Living framework and for the notes of the next Governors' visit to be shared with me at my next visit .</p>	<p><b>Response to last visit</b> Development of independent living framework will be shown on the next visit.</p> <p><b>Verification in this Visit</b> I can confirm that during this visit I spoke to the Head of Residential and it is clear that the language being used is being updated, incorporating the support of the therapy lead. This is currently being updated by the residential admin officer. This is to be a focus in the Standard 3 visit in term 4.</p>

### How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.

<p>During this visit I discussed recent events with the Head of Residential and there have been no incidents that have resulted in support being requested from external services since my last visit in term 2.</p> <p>We also covered internal responses to concerns and dialogue that takes place with families, and it was explained that there has been recent contact with a parent over some marks that had been reported after a boarding stay. The boarder in question had been swimming and supported in personal care and the marks referred to had not been observed in the school day.</p> <p>The discussion that took place was sensibly managed and collaborative, and as a result of the discussions I have had I am more than satisfied over the school's management of this case. It clearly aligns with the commentary from OFSTED in the recent report that states "Comprehensive safeguarding strategies are agreed, implemented, and their impact on children's safety is monitored and reviewed".</p> <p>As a result of this visit I remain of the opinion that safeguarding practices are strong at Linden Lodge and I have no concerns.</p>
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### Mandatory Areas

Topic	Comments
<p><b>Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes</b> 20.9</p>	<p>The Head of Residential explained that there have again been no missing episodes and no exclusions since the last Standard 3 visit.</p> <p>Attendance figures since my last visit in term 2 have averaged at 92.7% for boarders, with a corresponding figure for day pupils of 90.5%. These attendance figures remain slightly more positive for boarders, indicating that boarding helps to increase attendance. In addition, the absence figures illustrate the positive impact of attending boarding as residents' absence rates currently sit at 7.1% authorised, and 0% unauthorised.</p>
<p><b>Complaints</b> 19.1, 19.2, 19.3</p>	<p>The Head of Residential and I discussed this area and I was informed that that there have been no complaints since my last visit took place in term 2. The OFSTED report states that "Staff communicate exceptionally well with children's parents and recognise the importance of family relationships", and I concur entirely with this view. The discussions that have been spoken about between staff and families in this visit alone showcase this and ensure that complaints are very unlikely in my view.</p>

<b>Sanctions</b> 20.6	The Head of Residential informed me that there have been no sanctions applied since my last visit in term 2. The time I spent with residents and staff was filled with lovely interactions between staff and boarders, as well as great engagement with me. The views of pupils are constantly sought and as a result their needs are well met. Sanctions are thereby not needed in general.
<b>Restraint (including restrictive interventions)</b> 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7	The Head of Residential explained that there have been again no occasions when restrictive interventions have been used since my last visit in term 2. The oversight of the residents remains supportive and proactive, therefore negating the need for these interventions.
<b>Risk Assessments</b> Appendix B (11,16)	During this visit the Head of Residential explained that all care plans and risk assessments are due a full review after the half term break in February. This is in line with the expectations of the national minimum standards and sees the staff team capture any changes to needs in them, along with built in checks and quality assurance.
<b>Placement Plans</b> 7.2	The oversight of this process reflects the comments in the recent OFSTED inspection that “accomplished and confident leadership ensures that there is a thoroughly cohesive whole-school approach to give residential children the best level of care”.

### **Suitability of the building, furnishings & external environment.**

During this visit I was informed that the remaining area for improvement included in the OFSTED inspection report relates to ensuring that the aforementioned development plan for maintenance and premises ‘proceeds at an appropriate pace’. This is to build upon the fact that the premises are under constant monitoring and update as a matter of course to keep it suitable for the residents.

There have been recent developments through the new residential house sign (made from reclaimed, recycled materials that I have referenced elsewhere in this report), and also in the new approach to the use of canvasses for pupils to decorate themselves. There are plans in place to refurbish areas in the kitchen space (new sink and breakfast bar) on the ground floor, and the recreation space on the first floor.

I was also informed that a recent donation to the school is to see an injection of capital to the planned maintenance schedule. I will look to follow this up in my next visit in term 4.

### **Consultations Supporting this Visit.**

Under Standard 3 this is stated as meaning that conversations with children, senior management team, staff and parents/carers and social workers, where relevant.

#### **Consultations with Co-Headteacher, Head of Residential and Deputy Residential Childcare Manager.**

This visit saw me reflect upon the recently received OFSTED report that is due for imminent publication. I am very pleased for the residential staff team and for the leadership team in particular as it feels like their hard work over an extended period has been very much the reason for the positive feedback.

I am equally impressed that the eyes of the Head of Residential are now firmly focused upon the next steps that can be taken to embed this outcome and build upon it. We discussed the next steps and covered how the SCCIF audit can be refined to showcase recent developments and capture the next steps that are set to be taken. We also discussed the fact that there is a new community link established with Wandsworth Prison, and

a further range of other local bodies are being considered, including a recent connection to another Wandsworth based residential special school, and regular PCSO visits being planned.

The Deputy Residential Childcare Manager explained that there is a new connection that has been established with a local recycling provider that receives donations from large organisations (such as London theatres). This was referred to as the SCRAP art project, and costs a minimal amount. Staff are able to visit a few times a month. This has so far resulted in a lot of art materials being gathered and used (the new signs for residential are an example), and is in use across the residential and school setup. This is a really lovely development.

#### **Time spent with Boarders and Staff in this visit**

I once again toured the residential service and spent time with all residents in this visit. They were engaged in a range of activities across the two floors.

I caught up with a number of residents that I have met in previous visits, and they greeted me warmly. They explained recent events and how much they enjoy their residential time. I also spoke to a resident that I had not met before who has been boarding for quite a while, and he explained how much he enjoys the opportunity to cook in residential, as well as explaining his hopes for the future in terms of attending University. We discussed the concept of accessibility for visually impaired students and he told me how he is currently researching these elements. It was a delight to hear his aspirational viewpoint and he has clearly been well supported in this by the school overall. Residential is playing a key part in his development and ensuring he looks forward.

I also discussed recent trips and the home locations of a number of the residents as they asked me questions about where I live and work. This generated a vibrant discussion about visits I have made close to places that they know, come from or have been (Kent, Birmingham etc). Overall the atmosphere was very friendly and reflective of a comfortable and happy family unit.

#### **Parent Consultation of a recently started boarder**

Following this Standard 3 visit, I contacted the parents of a boarder that has recently begun boarding. They explained that their child has recently begun attending Linden Lodge and came in as a boarder in September 2023. The boarder is 12 years old and the aim is to see long term attendance. The move into the setup has been the first time that boarding has been a feature of the family's lives, and as such this has been a challenging period to navigate in spite of the fact that their needs are being met more than in their previous school placement. The switch was predominantly due to the ready availability of therapy and good facilities.

The school is not local to the family home and as a result there were some settling in issues. The journey to school each Monday is still challenging, but once at school things are good.

The parents were full of praise for the handover process between the two schools and are very happy with the communication from school and the staff's ongoing support. They stated they are kept up to date at least 4 times every week, and at least every other day with the Residential House.

Overall the parents are very happy with the support on offer, and as such they have no concerns at all about the overall care in place.

Thematic Areas	
Standard/SCCIF Reference	Evidence / Observation
	None undertaken at this visit.

### Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision

This was an extremely positive visit in which the leaders have showcased how the recent OFSTED inspection is being built upon in future planning and adding to the existing strengths of the Residential setup. To have achieved the outcome that has taken place is the product of hard work over a long time, and there is a determination to remain focussed on maintaining and improving standards wherever possible.

The staff and residents that I spent time with in this visit were very happy and comfortable in each other's company and enjoying their evening. Care remains of a high standard, and this is now to be shared with the full staff team. They fully deserve this recent outcome.

I would like to thank everyone at Linden Lodge for their warm welcome each time that I visit and I am looking forward to next term.

**Name: Mark Goode**

**Date: 02/02/2024**

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT

Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<p><b><u>Independence Living Framework</u></b> For the Head of Residential to ensure that the new framework is available for scrutiny during my visit in term 4.</p>	<p>Independence Living Framework will be available for Mark to see on his next visit.</p>	<p>Term 4 2024</p>
<p><b><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The Effectiveness of Leaders &amp; Managers</u></b> Leaders and managers lead by example, innovate and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest quality care for children.</p>	<p>Highest quality of care will be sustained and reviewed regularly.</p>	<p>Term 4 2024 ongoing</p>
<p><b><u>Maintenance Plan discussions</u></b> For Leaders to continue the planning for the use of the recent donation and add to the maintenance development plan.</p>	<p>The maintenance development will continue and improvements evidenced at Mark's next visit.</p>	<p>Term 4 2024</p>
<p><b><u>SCCIF (Good Criteria): The Effectiveness of Leaders &amp; Managers</u></b> The head of school ensures that the physical environment is maintained to a high standard, is comfortable and meets the needs of the children. Any damage or wear and tear is quickly and regularly repaired.</p>	<p>Any damaged or wear and tear is quickly repaired or replaced</p>	<p>Term 4 2024 ongoing</p>

<p><b>Consultations for term 4</b> For the Head of Residential to make advance arrangements to facilitate consultations in term 4 with the parents of the newest boarder and the Independent Person in my next visit.</p>	<p>Arrangements for Mark to contact newest boarder's parents at his next unannounced visit.</p>	<p>Term 4 2024</p>
<p><b><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The Effectiveness of Leaders &amp; Managers</u></b> Leaders and managers develop and maintain professional relationships between the school and partner agencies that ensure the best possible care, experiences and futures for children.</p>	<p>Maintain, professional working relationships with school and partner agencies. This will ensure the best possible care, experiences and futures for children and young people.</p>	<p>Term 4 2024 ongoing</p>

#### Head of Residential's Comments

Thank you so much for your positive feedback in the report. A lovely report to read, also capturing how committed the residential team are in providing the young people the best possible experience. The team are very proud of our young people's achievements and constantly strive to build and empower the young people to develop life skills for the future.

**Name: Danny Sinclair**

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

#### Head Teachers' Comments

Since our last inspection it has been a year of growth and development which has been captured incredibly well in this and previous reports from Mark. We are extremely proud of the progress that our residential students have been able to make with the solid foundation created by the whole of the residential team led by Danny and Vicky.

**Name: Sarah Norris**

**Date: 8 February 2024**

#### Formal Response from the Governing Body, trustees, or proprietor of the school



**Name:** This is another positive report of the service and care provided to residents at Richley House. The findings are well evidenced and they reflect the outcome of the OfSTED report that has been published since this visit took place. That report and the evidence contained here adds to the confidence Governors have in the very high standard of care offered by staff at Richley House.

As the Governor with lead responsibility for safeguarding I was aware of, and had discussed the situation with the child referred to in the report and I was also satisfied that staff had acted correctly with a clear focus in the wellbeing of the student in mind. The fact the issue was also discussed with the Independent Visitor adds confidence of the effectiveness of communication around safeguarding in Linden Lodge and is further evidence of the safety of children.

Governors add their congratulations to the staff group and the leadership following the outstanding outcome by OfSTED.

Thank you all for your continued commitment and hard work for these pupils

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. 110/12', written on a light-colored background.

**Date: 13/02/2024**