



LINDEN LODGE SCHOOL

Standard 20 Visitors Report



June 2020

Independent Visitor Report- Standard 20

As defined by The Residential Special Schools – National Minimum Standards effective from 1st April 2015.

Standard 20 - Monitoring by Independent Visitors.

20.1 The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who is independent of the management of the school, to visit the school six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the head teacher (or school equivalent).

20.2 Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include:

- checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children;
- evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded;
- assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and
- opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish).

20.3 Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the head teacher (or school equivalent) and where applicable the governing body, organisation, or partnership. 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. Monitoring reports should be retained by the school and made available during an inspection.

20.4 The head teacher (or school equivalent), governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school carries out, and records in writing, once each year:

- a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for boarding 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.

Where appropriate such a report may be incorporated within a review of the whole school.

The following is a synopsis of MS Team meeting with the Head of Care on the 15th June 2020.

Due to the on-going safety advice and precautions being taken to protect and limit any spread of Covid-19, both the school and Richley House at Linden Lodge remains closed. This is a perfectly understandable decision to have been taken, bearing in mind all the guidance provided by the Government, Public Health England and Ofsted.

There are also a number of young people who attend Linden Lodge and stay at Richley House, that have significant underlying additional health needs/concerns, that would put them in a high-risk group should they become infected with the Coronavirus.

The last night of boarding at Richley House was on the 18th March 2020.

This report was compiled following a web meeting with the Head of Care on the 15th June 2020. This was a very informative conversation and we were able to discuss many areas pertinent to the boarding provision within Linden Lodge.

The decision has been taken that Richley House will not re-open for boarders, at least, until September. It will only open if it is safe and appropriate to do so, adhering to the current advice and recommendations from Government bodies.

It is planned that Linden Lodge will reopen for a limited number of students as from the 23rd June, with very clear risk assessments and personalised plans in place for each student.

The Head of Care spoke with confidence regarding the plans and protocols that will be in place for students returning to school.

There have been regular “newsletters” to parents posted on the school’s website, along with other interactive initiatives to provide support, advice and engagement with families and carers.

Attendance

Any unauthorised absences? ~~Yes~~ No

The last night of boarding was the 18th March 2020. From that date no student has stayed at Richley House overnight.

From talking with the Head of Care, I was advised that care staff had remained in contact with a number of students who would normally have stayed at the home. They have provided parents and carers with advice and support, which I was told had been received very positively.

This has also included virtual “hellos” to the students as well and some planned visits

to deliver equipment etc., observing the correct level of social distancing.

Discussions are already underway and plans being considered, as to the safest way to re-open Richley House in September.

Sanctions

Any major sanctions since the last visit? ~~Yes~~ No

Since my last visit, there was only one night of boarding.

In line with previous reports, there were no sanctions or consequences imposed since my last visit.

Physical Interventions

Any physical interventions since the last visit? ~~Yes~~ No

There have been no Physical Interventions within Richley House since my last visit.

Complaints

Any complaints/concerns since the last visit? ~~Yes~~ No

No formal complaints had been received or made within Richley House since my last visit.

Risk Assessments

Any risk assessments undertaken since the last visit? Yes ~~No~~

The school is currently on Version 10 of the Risk Assessment and Protocol in relation to dealing with and managing Covid-19.

The Head of Care has continued to review a number of Risk Assessments, in place with Richley House; these are in relation to the environment, individual young people and areas of general care practice.

When the school re-opens for a limited number of students on the 23rd June, there are clear Risk Assessments, policies and protocols in place, to provide guidance to each member of staff to keep them and each young person safe and protected from harm and minimising the risk of contracting Covid-19.

Individual Care Plans

Were care plans up to date? Yes No

These will need to be reviewed and updated in September when the students return to staying overnight at the home.

Environment

Were there any premises issues? Yes No

It was not possible to assess this due to the constraints imposed by Covid-19 and not being able to physically visit Richley House.

I was told that Richley House has been deep cleaned and is subject to continuous cleaning to make it a safe venue for the students who will be accessing it as part of their "learning bubbles."

Safeguarding

Any safeguarding / child protection issues relating to residential pupils? Yes No

During my conversation with the Head of Care, I was not made aware of any "safeguarding" issues relating to the staff or young people at Richley House, since my last visit.

I have had sight of the policy written by the Head of Care in relation to any use of electronic surveillance and recording. **This will also be incorporated in Richley House's Statement of Purpose.**

The school is making every effort to ensure that when students return to school they will be appropriately safeguarded from harm.

The young people who will be accessing Richley House as part of their learning bubble, will be young people who have stayed there previously overnight. This will greatly assist them in being able to move around their environment with safety. They will also be supported by care staff that they know and are familiar with. This is an additional safeguarding measure.

Medication records

Were medication records up to date and double signed? Yes No

These records were all within Richley House/School, so I was not able to view them at this time.

The Health Care Assistants (HCA) and additional Nursing support will be available to the school when it re-opens on the 23rd June 2020.

At my last visit, I was told that the revised Medication Policy was with the Board of Governors for ratification. Has this now been achieved?

Staffing, Supervision and Appraisal

Were staffing levels good? ~~Yes~~ No

Were residential staff supervision and appraisal notes up to date? ~~Yes~~ No

I was unable to verify this, but have every confidence in the Head of Care's account, that during the period since my last visit, supervision and training has continued within the care team.

The Head of Care has also been involved in providing some Induction Training, provided to new Teaching and Support staff via MS Teams.

Staff are being encouraged and supported to use this opportunity to work on their L3 Qualification.

The Head of Care has actively pursued both the current training provider and an alternative one to ensure staff have the opportunity to access training.

Food

Was the food of good quality and adequate portions? ~~Yes~~ No

Unable to access.

Security

Was the site security good? ~~Yes~~ No

I was unable to directly assess or view this.

However, the restriction of visitors and temporary closure of the school and Richley House, in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, which has all been shared with parents, families and other visitors, via email, updates on the school website, posters and notices around the campus etc., leads me to believe that the security across the school and Richley House is proportionate and practical to keep the whole campus safe.

Activities

Were there appropriate activities taking place? ~~Yes~~ ~~No~~

There have been no students staying at the home since the 18th March 2020.

Pupils

Did the pupils appear happy & content? ~~Yes~~ ~~No~~

There were no students to observe. Both telephone and media calls have been made to the young people who would normally have accessed Richley House.

The Head of Care has ensured that Transition Plans for students, due to leave the school this year who have a residential component to their EHCP/Care Plan, have been appropriately contributed too.

Staff interaction

Was the staff interaction positive? ~~Yes~~ ~~No~~

Unable to assess.

Personnel Files

Were any residential staff personnel files checked? ~~Yes~~ ~~No~~
If so, how many?

Was the required information evident? ~~Yes~~ ~~No~~

Due to the continued Health and Safety measures in place across Linden Lodge it was not possible to cover this area during my virtual meeting with the Head of Care.

At my next visit, I will follow up on the suggestion made in my last report – which was:

I did discuss the Central List with the Head of Care and my suggestion would be for the care staff to have a separate “tab” within the spreadsheet held by the HR Team.

General Observations

From my conversation with the Head of Care, I am confident that the school and Richley House are working in parallel to ensure that all the students “on roll” at Linden Lodge are still receiving support, educationally via a Virtual School approach and care via calls from the team at Richley House, as well as teletherapy whereby

the Therapy Team are supporting families and young people via webinars to help transfer skills to parents and carers.

There has been a very careful and cautious approach to the re-opening of the school, without boarding until September 2020. For those students that are unable to be included in the groupings coming into the school, their virtual teaching and learning will continue.

The plan is to create five distinct learning zones/bubbles. This will allow a number of students attend the school in a phased way. There will be clear pathways established around the school and grounds. Within Richley House, there will be a dedicated one-way system throughout the building.

There will be a strong emphasis on communication and observations of the young people, along with the strict adherence to social distancing (as far as practical and safe to do so), high standards of hygiene and regular changes and use of PPE.

It was positive to hear that the six members of staff who have recently been “signed up” on the L3 course have already achieved 15% of the requisite learning to complete the course.

The Head of Care is aware of the need to review the Statement of Purpose, review PEEP’s for students who may board from September and have a clear format for Impact Risk Assessments for returning and new students who may come to stay at Richley House.

Unfortunately, the following issues identified within previous reports, remain unanswered.

I would appreciate feedback on these prior to my next visit.

- 1) Please can it be confirmed whether each young person now has their own ID card so they can “swipe” themselves into particular areas?
- 2) The identified loose and broken slats on the pathway through the outdoor play equipment, noted in my last two reports, still requires repairing.
- 3) There was going to be a review of the Clinical Governance and Safeguarding by the Local CCG. I was contacted by someone asking for advice, but I have had no further communique from them, is this still progressing?
- 4) The home was also looking for a Pharmacist to undertake a Medication Review within Richley House – has this been achieved?
- 5) I would suggest the Fire Evacuation Area for Richley House is reviewed – please see comments in the main report.

L Miles

Lance Miles
Standard 20 Independent Visitor

L Miles Associates - Independent Social Work Consultancy

26th June 2020