



Standard 3 Visit

Name of Service	Linden Lodge School
Date of previous visit	19/03/2024
Date of this visit	29/04/2024
Standard 3 Visitor	Mark Goode
Time of visit	15.00
Visit Supported by	Vicky Watson – Deputy Residential Childcare Manager Danny Sinclair – Head of Residential Sarah Norris – Co-Headteacher responsible for Residential

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 5th 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.

In terms of the context of the residential setup, I was informed that there has been 1 recent new starter identified into Residential that is beginning boarding this week. This sees numbers set to reach 17, although there are 3 due to leave this academic year in July. Staffing has been somewhat tricky in recent weeks, with the Head of Residential commenting that absence has risen, although the HR team and the leaders are all managing things appropriately to support staffing levels remaining as required and the boarders are still receiving appropriate care as a result. Recruitment remains a focus moving forward with the use of an agency in place to see this happen.

The Head of Residential also explained that there have been lots of parental requests to view residential with a view to possible boarding for a range of students.

This visit saw me spend time alongside the three key leaders of residential, review all mandatory areas required of a Standard 3 visit, complete consultations of paperwork, contact the parents of a boarder, and spend time in the residential houses with boarders and staff.

Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and Verification by Independent Visitor
<p><u>Termly Reviews of Placement Plans. Risk Assessments and PBS Strategies</u> For the leaders to complete the new review processes and make a sample of all three processes of review available for scrutiny at my next visit.</p>	<p><u>Response and Verification in this visit</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed new planning formats for Positive Behaviour Systems and they are well thought through and formulated. • All about me plans are detailed and thorough, containing new review dates box. Further details in the Mandatory Section below. • Positive Behaviour plans contain detailed RAG rated zones of regulation details that are very useful and thorough for use with boarders. This empowers staff well in their work.
<p><u>Maintenance Schedule and Independence Framework Collaboration</u> For both of these key areas of ongoing work to be further developed and available for review in my term 5 visit.</p>	<p><u>Response and Verification in this visit</u> The Leaders informed me that works continue to be undertaken in line with the plans that were themselves given impetus by the recent OFSTED report. Since my last visit in term 4 there has been a repair made to the sink in one of the lounges that was needed and the toilets have been painted. Work was undertaken in a range of ways to see general upkeep maintained over Easter and work also happens on Fridays when boarders do not attend.</p>
<p><u>Next steps planning for upcoming leavers</u> For the onward plans for the three residents that are due to leave Linden Lodge in the summer to be available for review at the term 5 visit.</p>	<p><u>Response and Verification in this visit</u> During this visit I was informed that of the three prospective leavers this summer one has a secure place and the other two are in the process of seeking places at present. I agreed to undertake a consultation with one of these families in this visit, and with the other next time. The details of this are contained in the consultations section below. I was also informed that there is an upcoming Careers day taking place with lots of providers attending that may be useful for next steps for this cohort of leavers, and for future leavers as well. This could be useful in many ways and I have added more detail in the consultations section below.</p>

How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.

The Co-Headteacher responsible for Residential and the Head of Residential informed me that there have been no issues of concern internally or requiring the support of external agencies related to the boarding cohort since my last visit in term 4. They also explained that they were due to attend and complete their annual DSL refresher the next day.

There is a constant reflective focus upon boarders and student safety at Linden Lodge that is reflected in the record keeping and in the systemic training that takes place (and is reflected in the priority given to it for all staff). I have no concerns and remain of the opinion that safeguarding practices are strong at Linden Lodge.

Mandatory Areas

Topic	Comments
Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes 20.9	During this visit the Residential Lead explained that there have again been no missing episodes and no exclusions since the last Standard 3 visit in term 4. Attendance figures since my last visit in term 2 have averaged at 92.3% for boarders, with a corresponding figure for day pupils of 90.1%. These attendance figures remain slightly more positive for boarders, indicating that boarding helps to increase attendance.
Complaints 19.1, 19.2, 19.3	The Head of Residential informed me that there have been no complaints since the date of my last visit in term 4, other than the fact that a boarder arrived at residential without a suitcase – the boarder then remembered this around 7pm during the first boarding stay of the week. The Residential staff attempted to retrieve it but the classroom was locked. The staff in residential did all that they could to support this, and whilst an email was received that can be interpreted as a formal complaint, it is my view that the staff actions reflect well upon the residential team and their supportive approach.
Sanctions 20.6	I was once again informed that there have been no sanctions applied since my last visit in term 4. The time I spent with residents and staff was filled with more positive interaction between staff and boarders, as well as appropriately firm insistence upon independence skills being used in mealtimes. Sanctions remain not needed in general in my experience of attending Linden Lodge.
Restraint (including restrictive interventions) 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7	I was once again informed that there have been no incidents since my last visit in term 4 that have required any form of reproach. It then follows that restraints, or the possibility of these are highly unlikely.
Risk Assessments Appendix B (11,16)	During this visit I was informed that reviews of all aspects of the plans that are held have recently been undertaken since the Easter break ended. The Head of Residential reflected upon the fact that doing all three components (PBS plans, Risk Assessments and All About Me documents) together with regularity is a useful exercise. There has not been much in the way of change to any of the plans, although one boarder is exhibiting a greater degree of challenge in the school day. The conjoined working leads to a natural awareness of all related to how best to support the boarders in their time across all parts of the organisation. .
Placement Plans 7.2	

Suitability of the building, furnishings & external environment.

During this visit I undertook a full tour of the premises used for residential and noted that the repairs referenced in the recommendations from last time are ongoing. The residents enjoy the use of a residential block that is constantly being monitored and maintained as described in the recent OFSTED report's recommendations, and as it is late Spring the outside spaces (including the hugely impressive play area) are truly coming into their own. The staff were focussed upon seeing the boarders use this as much as possible in the pleasant weather and this was a lovely feature of the evening that I attended.

The Head of Residential explained the fact that the shared office space used by the Residential Admin Officer and therapists is being re-organised, and I will look to see how this moves forward in my next visit in term 6. It is also clear that ongoing maintenance remains a high priority moving forward, perhaps best exemplified in this visit by explanation that there has been a need to undertake significant repair work to the internet setup after squirrels attacked and chewed through cables recently. The internet capacity was down for a few hours but is fully operational, and actually improved since the repairs.

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.

Consultation with Co-Headteacher, Head of Residential and Deputy Residential Childcare Manager.

This visit saw me spending time with all three leaders of the Residential Service and I received updates upon a range of areas as detailed in the recommendations catch-up higher up this report and detailed here:

The Head of Residential informed me that the therapy room that houses the Residential Admin officer alongside the therapy teams is being refitted and re-organised to see new notice boards and to be used more effectively. This includes making a storage area more accessible. This is a positive step moving forward that I will review in term 6.

The Head of Residential informed me that there is to be a Careers Fair taking place and shared details of this with me following the visit. This detail illustrated that this is an extremely wide ranging and well supported 2 day event that enables access to possible onward providers across a broad spectrum of needs and locations. In addition to this, the Head of Residential also explained that there is a 'Past Pupils Day' event in June that has connections to the careers fair event as well. This is a further clear illustration of the fact that support for boarders/students and their families extends well past what could be termed as standard levels of responsibility. Staff at Linden Lodge extend their support as far as is needed to give access to ongoing services in the name and application of helping their cohort be supported into the community in a meaningful, long-lasting and impactful way.

In all respects the leaders remain focussed on the provision of high quality care and supporting their staff team to be able to provide this.

Time spent with Boarders and Staff in this visit, including a residents' weekly meeting.

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 as boarding began and then all convened in the day room on the ground floor for a regular feature of the week, a boarding meeting. I was present as this proceeded with a team leader guiding the meeting in a way that was truly inclusive. The boarders with the capacity to feedback on their weekends themselves were encouraged to do so, and all managed to do so very eloquently. The non-verbal boarders had staff acting as their advocates as well, and responded as they best could to questions and were clearly involved. All boarders and staff listened well to the feedback on the events of weekends,

and the plans for the week ahead in boarding. This included the desire to see the outside spaces taken advantage of in the increasingly pleasant spring weather and passing out of certificates for achievement in the previous week.

This was an example of a community sharing time that was important and showcased a supportive and collegiate group of people in action. Through doing this the boarders' dignity has been enhanced and the inclusion of all members of the boarding setup reinforces this.

Later I spent time alongside the boarders as they had dinner, and it was clear from the processes involved that staff work hard to reinforce the fact that many of the boarders are able to serve and feed themselves. Teenagers being what they are can lead to a default setting of waiting to be served, but the resource cards that detail the independence drive for many, and the gentle insistence from key staff was impressive, and as a result the boarders do act as independently as they can, sometimes in spite of their own wish to have things brought to them at times. I discussed this with the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager and it is a deliberate and intentional aim that works well.

Boarders were set to use the evening (as it was a Monday) to unpack for the week in residential, set rooms up and settle in for the week ahead as the evening passed.

Parent Consultation of a recently started boarder

Following this visit I attempted to reach the parents of a boarder that is set to leave Linden Lodge in the summer term. I had wished to speak to them about their care, and about the support for the search for a new placement from September but I was not able to reach them.

I intend to undertake a follow up to this in my next visit.

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

Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision
<p>This was a pleasant visit in which I noted a few features of the community that is represented in the residential provision at Linden Lodge. Leaders and staff remain committed to building upon the strong practices that exist in the Residential Setup, and are always looking to improve.</p> <p>The care on display was strong as I have come to expect.</p> <p>I would like to thank everyone at Linden Lodge for their warm welcome during my I visit and I am looking forward to next term.</p>

Name: Mark Goode		Date: 03/05/2024
RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT		
Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<p><u>Premises and Maintenance</u> For the reorganisation of the shared office to be completed, and for the ongoing programme of maintenance to be carried on in line with the recommendations that OFSTED made.</p>	Office will be completed before Mark's next visit he will be provided with an update on the maintenance programme.	Term 5 2024
<p><u>Future Planning for Residents that are approaching the end of their time at Linden Lodge</u> For the staff to continue to work on next steps for leavers, and to ensure that support enables families to have access to all information that they can to make these decisions (including the innovative Careers Fair).</p>	<p>Mark will be provided with an Update on the three, young people leaving at the end of the academic year.</p> <p>Mark will be given an update on the Careers Fairs.</p>	Ongoing

Head of Residential's Comments
<p>Thank you so much for your positive feedback in the report. I really appreciate the details you have included about areas we have developed.</p> <p>Thank you for the time you spent, with the young people, listening to their participation in the residential meeting and the comments you made about everyone is included in the meeting and having their contribution heard.</p> <p>It was nice for you to see the young people, doing things for themselves, serving their meals and being independent as possible.</p>
Name: Danny Sinclair
Date: 13th May 2024

Head Teachers' Comments
<p>Thank you for recognising and acknowledging all of the work that the residential team do to support our residents and their independence. It was a privilege to be able to attend the Monday afternoon student meeting with the residents and hear all about their updates from the weekend. We look forward to the next visit.</p>
Name: Sarah Norris
Date: 14 May 2024

Formal Response from the Governing Body, trustees, or proprietor of the school
<p>This is another helpful and positive report. The evidence of good safeguarding practice is strong, and the information from consultations with staff and residents is also helpful. The tracking of plans for residents and of the maintenance of the premises is helpful and the report assists the task for School Leaders and Governors in several important ways.</p>
Name: Kieran Travers
Date: 16 May 2024

