



## Standard 3 Visit

<b>Name of Service</b>	<b>Linden Lodge School</b>
<b>Date of previous visit</b>	<b>20.03.2025</b>
<b>Date of this visit</b>	<b>13.05.2025</b>
<b>Standard 3 Visitor</b>	<b>Mark Goode</b>
<b>Time of visit</b>	<b>14.30 – 17.00</b>
<b>Visit Supported by</b>	<b>Sarah Norris: Co-Headteacher responsible for Residential</b> <b>Danny Sinclair: Head of Residential</b> <b>Vicky Watson: Deputy Residential Childcare Manager</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 (last updated 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022, and reviewed as of 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024).**

**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.

I arrived for this visit on a Tuesday afternoon, in the penultimate week of the first half of the Summer Term, and was greeted by the Co-Head for Residential and the Head of Residential. The immediate focus of the visit was the current context, and the Leaders updated me on the fact of the developments since my last visit and we considered all parts of the mandatory checks that are required of all Standard 3 visits. The consultations section contains details of my discussions with the Leaders. I was informed that there have been no departures from the boarding cohort, and that three new boarders have been in the process of joining the Residential Service since I last visited in term 4 of this year. There have been some changes in staffing since I last attended, but the workload is being managed and recruitment from the School staff body is taking place as well.

I spent time with boarders and staff in the dining room spaces as the boarding evening began, engaged in a consultation with both the Head of Residential and the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager. In the days following the visit I spoke to the parents of two boarders that have recently begun boarding, and I undertook a further check in with the Site Manager related to fire procedures, as suggested in my last visit.

The Leaders and I discussed some recent staff absence and the impact it has had upon workload, and they informed me that a new staff member has been recruited into the Residential Team, from the School staff and I offered to meet with this team member in my next visit in term 6.

### Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and Verification by Independent Visitor
<p><b><u>SCCIF Review Post Ofsted Inspection</u></b> It was suggested that it would be prudent to review the SCCIF audit now that the most recent Inspection report has been published to make sure that the details are reflected in the audit. More than this however, I advocate making sure that all new and additional elements that are in place that enrich the experience of boarders are captured in the SCCIF reflection tool.</p>	<p><b><u>Response following last visit</u></b> SCCIF will be reviewed and enhanced. Areas will be identified in the SCCIF.</p> <p><b><u>Verification in this visit</u></b> The Head of Residential explained that a new RAG rating column has been added, and it is being worked through as a document with current evidence added in to the various areas that this is relevant to. I signposted the early part of next academic year for a focus upon the NMS review requirements of Standard 3.</p>

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

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 3. We discussed the recent events for boarders and the highest of standards are in evidence related to the care given. Staff's awareness of the needs of pupils, communication with families and vigilance all combine to ensure that safeguarding practices at Linden Lodge are of the highest standard. A clear example of this in this visit concerned a boarder's medication that was being discussed with the family to ensure they could board safely. This was managed well by the Leaders and saw them able to stay as agreed. There are no concerns following this visit related to safeguarding at Linden Lodge.

Mandatory Areas	
Topic	Comments
<b>Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes</b> 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 3. Attendance figures since my last visit in term 4 have averaged at 91.8% for boarders, with a corresponding figure for day pupils of 88.7%. These attendance figures remain more positive for boarders, indicating that boarding continues to help attendance.
<b>Complaints</b> 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. We discussed support offered to families in general, and for medication management in one case that exemplifies how well communication supports complaints being unlikely.
<b>Health and Safety Checks:</b> Specifically, Fire Safety in this visit	During this visit, I followed up my last visit and once again reviewed the Fire Risk Assessment as it has now been updated. This took place alongside the Health and Safety Manager and revealed a very comprehensive review having taken place and there being no concerns. There are 36 Fire Wardens, the systems in place are more than fit for purpose, and there is an action plan in place for management of all aspects.
<b>Sanctions</b> 20.6	I was once again informed that there have been no sanctions applied since my last visit in term 4. The time spent in the boarding space alongside staff and boarders once again demonstrated support that meets the needs and personalities of the different boarders. My view remains that this prevents the circumstances where sanctions may be needed.
<b>Restraint (including restrictive interventions)</b> 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 restraint or restrictive intervention. I continue to be of the view that there is very little likelihood of such events taking place based upon the interactions I observed in this visit. Staff and boarders share a mutual respect that is built upon familiarity, consistency and established routines.
<b>Risk Assessments</b> Appendix B (11,16)	During this visit I discussed the review processes for the oversight and reviews of all care plans and risk assessments. The Deputy Residential Childcare Manager confirmed that she and the Head of Residential have recently reviewed all updated plans and risk assessments. Plans remain comprehensive and simple.
<b>Placement Plans</b> 7.2	I then undertook a scrutiny exercise of the newest boarders' plans and risk assessments. I am pleased to report that they are thorough and detailed and updated as needed. There is a meticulous and consistent approach taken to their creation and review. Risk assessments are thorough, simple and accessible. All staff read and know all boarders' needs well. There are no concerns of any kind in this regard, reflected in the recent Outstanding Ofsted Inspection outcome.
<b>Suitability of the building, furnishings &amp; external environment.</b>	
During this Standard 3 visit I undertook a full tour of the Residential Provision at Richley House once again and noted the fact that the maintenance of all areas remains of a very high standard.	

A notable development in this visit was the further developments in the eco-garden project in the terrace area that is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the residential building. There is still some work to be done to see this completed but the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager explained that there are developments underway to see radishes, ginger and herbs grown. The aim is to see these used in cooking in the Residential setup. There is a clear connection to the current focus on 'our planet' that is present in the entrance hall to Residential as well. There are constant small tweaks to the building and resources each time that I visit, a hallmark of a constantly evolving and reflective service.

### **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 the Co-Headteacher and Head of Residential**

It was explained that a recent training that has been undertaken by the Co-Head for Residential and the Head of Residential has seen them undertake 'Make Real' training. This is an immersive experience that supports staff towards a better understanding of sensory impairment and can be targeted to mirror the exact conditions of individual boarders. This has been supported through the use of a benefactor donation, and is clearly a very innovative way to help staff in their work with the learners. The aim is to see this spread to the entire staff. This is an extremely creative process and one that showcases the fact that Linden Lodge simply does not stop evolving.

It was explained that the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager has begun Level 5 Management training.

The Head of Residential also stated that the staff team have been working extremely well together recently, and this is set to see some staff move across from School to the Residential setup. We agreed that this would be a focus for a consultation in my next visit in term 6.

The Head of Residential also confirmed that the SCCIF audit is a document that he is keen to see used to demonstrate constant improvement. I have evaluated this higher up this report.

#### **Time spent with Boarders and Staff during the visit**

During this visit I moved through all the two main floors that are used by the Residential Service and spent time with a number of the boarders. As I had been able to arrive prior to the boarders entering the Residential Space I was able to note the handover process that took place from School staff in the first floor lounge, and the sharing of any updates from the School day. This saw the live care plans passed over to the Residential team, and the boarders shared the events of their days with the staff, and with each other.

The next phase of the evening saw boarders take on snacks and discussing plans for the evening that lay ahead. I spoke at length to several of the boarders that I see most visits, and they updated me over their current situation and holiday plans. There were some clear solid friendships on display in the way boarders interacted with each other, and there was a genuine interest in each other's perspective on show. A new staff member that was present was allocated to spend time with one of the boarders, and this led to a period of room tidying and sharing of details about each other. The main feeling of the gathering was that of an extended family reconvening after a day at School or College, and this was heart-warming to note.

I then moved into the ground floor lounge where the higher need boarders were gathered and being prepared for their evening of boarding. Two were being readied for swimming and the staff were discussing the need for staff to accompany boarders for this. This was managed directly by the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager. It was also explained to the boarders and staff that the aim, unless swimming, was to ensure that boarders were

taken outside to experience a pleasant warm evening. The oversight of staff support was clearly co-ordinated by the Leaders, and staff's responsiveness to needs was in clear evidence.

**Parental Consultations undertaken in the days after this visit**

In the days following the visit, I spoke to parents of two boarders that have recently joined the residential cohort. The reflections of these families are detailed below:

- The first explained that their daughter is in the third week of boarding, and that this is the first residential experience for them at the age of 19. There has been some respite time in the past, but this is a new experience for all involved.
- The parent explained that the family felt that wider evening support was needed for a while and that there has been a funding issue that has delayed the process (not that the School have been any sort of factor in this).
- The family explained that onward transition is seeing the boarder move to an adult residential provision from October and that the boarding experience is to enable the boarder to get used to the process in a familiar setting first.
- The parent reflected that the experience has started very well, and after a few minor administrative hiccups, the boarder has very much enjoyed the experience so far. The parent feels confident in stating this as the boarder has presented as very happy at home and in School.
- The parent was full of praise for the staff team, especially the leadership of Residential, and has expressed gratitude that the boarder's dislike of change has been managed well through the use of familiar staff. It is early days but is felt to have been a positive start. There were no concerns noted by this parent at all.
  
- The second parent that I spoke to explained that the boarder has so far undertaken only one overnight stay. It had been expected that the fact that the boarder has experienced trauma may have led to the transition into boarding being challenging, but it has started very well indeed.
- The parent was keen to express the gratitude the family feel towards the 'amazing Leaders of the Residential setup'. There is a clear feeling that the staff's knowledge of the boarders has seen this boarder paired well with staff, and that this has led to a feeling of comfort in the surroundings.
- The boarder has now stated that they wish to board as many nights per week as are permitted – quite a turnaround in expectations for the family.
- The boarder has a clear focus on independence as a 16 year old, and is focussed upon forming more friendships. The parent expressed no concerns in this consultation related to the service.

These consultations exemplify the fact that transitions are well managed, and that the support on offer to boarders, and their wider families, is nurturing, sensitive and above all, successful.

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

**Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision**

This visit illustrated once again that the default expectation at Linden Lodge has become to always press for evolution of the setup, to make sure that complacency never enters the thinking. As such the Leaders demonstrated a great deal of resolve to maintain the standards and ensure that momentum is preserved in being outward looking and receptive to change for the betterment of the care and learning of the boarders.

I would like to thank everyone at Linden Lodge for their ongoing warm welcome during my visits, and for the fact that the feedback and challenge given has always been accepted and graciously enacted. It is this determination to evolve and raise the bar that ensures standards remain as high as they are. I look forward to my next visit.

**Name:** Mark Goode

**Date:** 21.05.25

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Comments from Provider</b>	<b>Expected Completion Date</b>
<p><b><u>Staff Consultations into term 6</u></b> For the staff that move across from the School into the Residential Setup to be available for consultation in my next visit related to induction and settling into their roles.</p> <p><b><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The effectiveness of Leaders and Managers</u></b> Leaders and Managers create a culture of aspiration and positivity. They have high expectations of their staff to change and improve the lives of the children they are responsible for.</p>	<p>Mark to meet and spend time with the new staff.</p> <p>Staff have received a number of training. Mark will be shown the list of training that best equip the staff to meet the needs of the young people.</p>	<p>Term 6</p> <p>Term 6</p>
<p><b><u>NMS Audit</u></b> For the Leaders of Residential to consider the best way to prepare for the annual requirement in Standard 3 of the NMS to undertake a full review of the service.</p> <p><b><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The effectiveness of Leaders and Managers</u></b> Leaders and Managers know their strengths and weaknesses well and can provide evidence of improvement over a sustained period.</p>	<p>Updated audit will show progress and preparing for annual requirement.</p> <p>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>Term 6</p> <p>Term 6</p>

### Head of Residential's Comments

Thank you so much for your feedback in the report. I really appreciate the details you have included about areas we have developed for the young people.  
Thank you for the time you spent, with the young people, listening to their participation in the residential activities.  
We look forward to your next visit.

**Name:** Danny Sinclair

**Date:** 04.06.2025

### Head Teacher's Comments

It is a pleasure to read and be reassured that the actions that we take as Leaders in Residential are reflected in the actions and behaviours of staff and responses from parents. This confirms that our priorities are continuing to meet the needs of our young people in residential.

**Name:** Sarah Norris

**Date:** 05.06.2025

### Formal Response from the Governing Body, Trustees, or Proprietor of the School

Your report encompassed all the necessary components of Residential provision in Richley House for parents, families, carers and wider providers.

The time spent and conversations with parents of boarders, staff, boarders, Co-Heads and Residential Head, captured how the setting go over and above to provide a successful experience, ensuring the children and young people's needs are met, that they are safely nurtured and happy in a home from home.

**Name:** Winnie Williams, Residential Parent Governor

**Date:** 12.06.2025