



Standard 3 Visit

Name of Service	Linden Lodge School
Date of previous visit	25.02.2026
Date of this visit	20.04.2026
Standard 3 Visitor	Mark Goode
Time of visit	2.00pm – 4.45pm
Visit Supported by	Danny Sinclair: Head of Residential Sarah Norris: Co-Headteacher responsible for Residential Vicky Watson: Deputy Residential Childcare Manager

About the Independent Visitor

Visiting the residential provision today is Mark Goode. Mark has worked in the Education sector for the past 25 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 (SCCIF (04/09/25), NMS (05/09/2022)).

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.

I arrived for this visit on a Monday afternoon, in the second week of the first half term of the Summer year, just after the Easter Holiday, and was greeted by the Head of Residential and the Co-Head of School for Residential. We undertook a consultation and catch up on last term's visit/recommendations. I then undertook all mandatory updates required of a Standard 3 visit alongside the Head of Residential. I was later given a tour around all areas of the Residential Space with the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager. We discussed a range of areas and I noted the start of the boarding week and spoke to a number of boarders at the same time. A key area of discussion in this visit was the most recent OFSTED Inspection of the Residential Service that had taken place just prior to the term 4 Standard 3 visit. This has now been published as a very strong endorsement of the service. All areas have retained outstanding status, and we discussed how to move forward when no recommendations have been left. I also contacted a number of parents in the days that followed the visit to gather their views, and these are also showcased in the relevant consultations section below.

Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and Verification by Independent Visitor
<p><u>Leadership Actions</u> To implement the reflections made since the recent Ofsted Inspection and ensure evidence is gathered, and that the monitoring reviews (SCCIF Audit and NMS Review) capture these elements as time passes.</p>	<p><u>Response and Verification in this visit</u> The last visit in term 4 saw the Leaders reflect upon key priority areas which were considered important moving forward and I caught up with leaders over these during this visit. The details of the updates are contained in my consultation below:</p>

How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.

The Head of Residential explained that there have been no other issues of concern internally or requiring the support of external agencies related to the boarding cohort since my last visit in term 4. I remain of the view that the care given remains as strong as I have become accustomed to in my time visiting the school. I therefore have no concerns following this visit related to safeguarding at Linden Lodge and agree with the judgement of the recent OFSTED Inspection: *"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"*.

Mandatory Areas

Topic	Comments
<p>Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes 20.9</p>	<p>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 for Boarders since my last visit in term 6 of last year have averaged at 89.7% for boarders, with a corresponding figure for day pupils of 84.2%. These attendance figures remain more positive for boarders, indicating a positive impact.</p>

Complaints 19.1, 19.2, 19.3	The Head of Residential explained that there have been no formal complaints since the date of my last visit in term 4. The interactions that I observed between staff and boarders as they arrived for boarding as the week started demonstrated how well staff follow the plans in place and truly know their needs. As such, complaints remain extremely unlikely in my view.
Health and Safety Checks: Specifically, Fire Safety in this visit	The last visit saw me observe a scheduled and unannounced (to staff and boarders) Fire Drill. This visit saw a formally recorded review of this process shared with me. I am happy to confirm that this illustrates a reflection of a successful process being undertaken with no learning actions required. This chimes with the observations I made during the last visit. A well-executed process and reflection that aligns with it.
Sanctions 20.6	I was once again informed that there have been no sanctions applied since my last visit in term 4. The time that I spent in the boarding space alongside staff and boarders saw very high standards of proactive care demonstrated. It therefore remains the case that sanctions are not needed in my opinion.
Restraint (including restrictive interventions) 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7	There have been no incidents since my last visit in term 4 that have required restraint or restrictive intervention. I remain of the opinion that there is very little likelihood of such events taking place based upon the interactions I observed in this visit.
Risk Assessments Appendix B (11,16)	Following my last visit when I discussed the review processes for the oversight and reviews of all care plans and risk assessments, the recent OFSTED Inspection commented that: <i>“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”</i> . This high quality was again on show in this visit as the Head of Residential explained that Staff are currently reading, updating, and reviewing all plans. Vicky and Danny will then review and update. I will look to review the outcomes of this process in my term 6 visit.
Placement Plans 7.2	

Suitability of the building, furnishings & external environment.

During this Standard 3 visit I once again moved through the entire Residential Provision at Richley House and am happy to confirm the high standard of maintenance of all areas remains the same. The leaders stated that there has been more soundproofing added to the walls in the ground floor area, and that this has made a big difference in supporting boarders to settle in this area. There are also additional works planned for the Summer with corridors set to be painted on the ground and first floors, as well as further developments to the newly planned Cinema space on the Ground Floor. The premises continue to support boarders and staff well as a comfortable and familiar setting for all concerned. The Summer weather and beautiful grounds also support some wildlife that gives the grounds an almost rural feel which is peaceful and very pleasant.

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, Head of Residential and Deputy Residential Childcare Manager

This visit saw the following areas discussed with the leaders of the Residential Service:

Boarding Cohort and Staffing:

I was informed that there are 5 potential new boarders being discussed between day pupils and external referrals. There have been no staff changes since my last visit in term 4, although there is an interview set for the day after my visit for a new team leader.

Recent OFSTED Inspection reflections:

The publication of the OFSTED Inspection report and the retention of Outstanding status is clearly welcomed and, in my view, richly deserved by the staff team. I particularly echo the comments from the report that states that (among other extended comments that demonstrate high praise): *“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”*. I concur entirely with this view and the relentlessness of the leaders to continue pressing for the highest standards was again illustrated in this visit as my comments related to the attention to detail and challenge being brought to bear to support transitions to new providers attest. This sometimes sees this challenge applied to secure retention of residents if it is in their best interests. This is simply based in the fact that the leaders want the best and most sustainable outcomes for all boarders, following this through with persistence.

The last visit I undertook in term 4 saw the OFSTED Inspection reflected upon and the following areas cited as continuing priorities:

- Residential Pupils were set to have the opportunity to invite friends that are day pupils to lunch in Richley House – this is intended for social skills development. This visit saw this facet added to in that cooking meals for friends that are day students is being planned for June alongside the activities co-ordinator. This is set to take place on a Friday lunchtime, with close liaison between Residential and Day staff taking place. I will look to follow this up in the next visit I undertake in term 6.
- There was a process related to ensuring that checks of documentation processes were underway to ensure that scanned versions of some paperwork always matches the hard copies held in the Residential Offices. This visit saw it confirmed that this is underway and being done. This is a clear example of proactivity in systems and is commendable.
- Another area discussed in this visit that is notable in this regard is that a Post OFSTED Meeting has led to the concept of a Professionals Day being considered as a means to showcase the high standards that Linden Lodge works to and invite other providers and professional colleagues to this. I suggested a school that I feel may be suitable to connect to and have offered to share contact details.

Discussion concerning Boarders approaching Transition point.

I discussed the coming summer transition point and it is clear that 3 boarders are set to leave. There has been extensive work undertaken related to their next placements, and the Head of Residential liaised with the Head of the 6th form during my visit. All are either placed or close to placement and it was clear that a great deal of support for families has been brought to bear to enable the correct placements to be arrived at. The next phase was explained as the boarders will be supported to attend visits. The parental contact made in this visit was centred around this group of residents as detailed in the consultations below.

The process also showcased how one border is set to see a ‘team around the family’ meeting take place to make sure that early transition planning is in place. The details and rationale for this was explained as the boarder in question is well known to staff, and the planning alongside the referring local authority that was shared is of an extremely well-considered standard. The leaders shared the fact that they consider reflection based upon all aspects of home and school care to be factored into the decision process. This was an exemplification of the highest standards of support and I feel that the leaders are demonstrating a key reason that they are so highly regarded.

Connection to St Piers' School, Lingfield, and Oak Lodge School, Balham.

These two connections have been maintained and I am happy that these liaisons are considered to be beneficial.

Residential Pet

The Head of Residential informed me learners are set to visit a pet store very soon to organise the pet. I agreed to catch up on this in my next visit in term 6.

Whole School Food Project

Plans for this are being developed and it was suggested that I can follow this up in the next visit that I undertake in term 6.

Time spent with Boarders and Staff

During the visit I spent time in both Residential floors alongside the different boarders and staff. In all areas I was struck, as this was a Monday visit, by the way the staff support is offered in a very well-oiled and natural way. Upon arrival, all boarders' plans are reviewed by the staff to gauge how the day has gone, but also to check on notes from home after the weekend. This information is then shared with all staff that need to be aware. Boarders are then supported to settle and regulate after arriving from the school day. This takes different forms for different boarders with some walking, some being given preferred toys, and others given snacks. Staff have allocated boarders and go to the task quietly and effectively. This has the effect of settling boarders in a calm and quick fashion.

Two boarders were also visited in the floor above the Residential Space, attending homework club. The support in place from staff was strong and bespoke, and saw one boarder then greeted by his known key worker to move down to the Residential Space. As I progressed along with him, we discussed plans for his birthday during the week and it was clear that he has chosen a place to visit and is looking forward to it. All support that I observed was well planned and clearly met needs well, ensuring a positive start to the week of boarding.

Parental Consultation undertaken in the days after this visit

In the days that followed this visit I reached out to the parents of two boarders to capture their views on the residential service as boarders have approached the end of their time at the school. The details that I have been able to gather are summarised as follows:

The first parent explained that her daughter has been attending Linden Lodge for a prolonged period and, having reached 19 years old, it was decided to undertake a period of boarding as her time at Linden Lodge came towards its end as a means to support independence skills development. The parent reported that her daughter loves boarding and her one evening a week in the Residential Service is regularly a source of happy communication. The boarder uses sign language to indicate happiness at the prospect of boarding. The parent went on to explain that progress has been supported in a number of ways, and made the point that understanding of personal care needs has seen a real help provided by the boarding process.

Staff support was highly praised by the parent and there were no concerns of any sort highlighted when asked. The next steps for the boarder have been well supported and a college place has been identified for September 2026. The parent explained that the support from the school in moving towards this has been greatly appreciated and continues.

By the time of the completion of this report I have been unable to reach the second parent in spite of numerous attempts being made.

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

Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision

This visit took place after the publication of the most recent affirmation of the high standards that run through everything that is undertaken at Linden Lodge, in the shape of the retained judgement of Outstanding in all areas from the recent Ofsted Inspection. The highest standards were again on show in this visit, and the way the Leaders have built upon this outcome already speaks to their determination to have the needs of the boarders and families underpin all decisions. My view related to the impact the work undertaken at Linden Lodge is summarised well by the report: “Staff enable children to make exceptional progress in all aspects of their lives”. This was supported in the parental feedback that I received in this visit and I would like to thank everyone at Linden Lodge for their continued transparency and welcoming nature. I look forward to my next visit in term 6 and wish everyone well.

Name: Mark Goode **Date:** 24.04.26

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT

Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<p><u>Ofsted Follow up actions</u> For the Residential Leaders to move ahead with the cited areas of development as the school year moves towards its conclusion and the staff prepare for the 2026-27 academic year.</p> <p><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The overall experiences and progress of children</u> There is significant evidence of change and improvement for children because of the actions of the staff working at the school. The progress of children is exceptional, taking into account their starting points.</p>	<p>Mark will be shown our plans for 2026- 2027</p> <p>Mark will be presented with the next steps, we are taking to further the overall experience and support the continued progress of our young people.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Head of Residential’s Comments

Thank you Mark for visiting us. It is always a pleasure to meet with you and discuss the progress of our young people, the work of our staff, and how we support families through transition.

It was particularly valuable for you to see the young people arriving from school and to observe the transition process in practice, as this is such an important part of their daily experience.

The telephone conversation you had with one of our families regarding their child’s experience and development whilst boarding is a strong reflection of the positive impact of collaborative working. It highlights the importance of maintaining open communication and partnership with families to support the best outcomes for each young person.

Thank you again for your time and continued support.

Name: Danny Sinclair
Date: 29th April 2026

Head Teacher's Comments

We look forward to Mark's visit to be able to have the opportunity to reflect on our practice and validate the work that is being done. But we are also delighted to have the opportunity to showcase all that Richley House does well. Particularly the life skills and independent skills that all of our young people are working on.

Name: Sarah Norris

Date: 1/5/2026

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

The report is comprehensive and detailed in a helpful way. It is helpful to read that the IV finds good evidence of effective planning for children and he will continue to review that process.

It is also helpful to read that the IV concurs with the evidence of outstanding practice found by Ofsted and leaders at the School and residential staff should be proud of that achievement. Governors certainly are. Well done

Name: Kieran Travers

Date: 08/05/2026