



Standard 20 Visit

Name of Service	Linden Lodge School
Date of previous visit	N/A – This is the first Standard 20 undertaken by Platinum Care Consultancy Ltd.
Date of this visit	16.03.22 Term 4
Visitor	Mark Goode
Time of visit	13.30
Visit Announced or Unannounced?	Announced

About the Independent Visitor

Visiting the residential provision today is Mark Goode. Mark has worked in the Education sector for the past 23 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 Inspector 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.

Introduction

As the Standard 20 Independent Visitor I will undertake checks on the School's records of:

- Attendance, Complaints, Sanctions, Use of Physical Intervention, Risk Assessments, Individual Care Plans for Children

There is also an intention to review other thematic areas:

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

On 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.

Context

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 currently has a roll of 143 pupils but is rising. The residential provision, which is spread across three floors with differing levels of support in place determined by need, can accommodate 24 weekly or part-time boarders (Monday to Friday). Residential placements are designed as an integral part of each child's specific educational and social programme, forming a 'waking day' curriculum, which considers their sensory impairment, physical disabilities, emotional well-being and medical needs, enabling them to develop to their full potential. At the time of this visit there were 18 boarders in the residential accommodation owing to adjustments that have been brought in as a response to the Covid pandemic. This has seen some shared rooms become singles to limit infections.

As this is the first Standard 20 visit undertaken by Platinum Care Ltd, I spent time with the Headteacher and the Head of Care and used this to gain an understanding of the residential provision and a clear view of how the visits I will undertake can add value to the school. Discussion took place related to recent inspection outcomes and possible areas of focus. There was also discussion of thematic areas that could be pursued. The Headteacher explained the recent OFSTED inspection experience and the areas for improvement that followed. I am keen to ensure that my visits are useful, and provide the appropriate challenge and support which the Headteacher has requested. A key focus in this visit was for me to develop an understanding of the issues currently facing Linden Lodge and to get a feel for the school.

My visit on this occasion has involved an early afternoon arrival and a meeting with the Headteacher followed by a period of time with the Head of Residential Care. We discussed the mandatory areas required of a Standard 20 visit, and considered a range of documents. Discussion took place in regard to a range of areas and suggestions were made related to these. I then enjoyed a tour of the residential premises that encompassed all three floors. The tour took place during boarding hours and I was able to meet many of the young people and saw a range of activities. I also met staff undertaking their evening duties.

The recent OFSTED inspection was discussed, and the Headteacher explained that an aim was to use this as a launchpad towards achieving Outstanding status as soon as possible. It was clear that the Covid Pandemic had meant that operations have been adjusted in a number of ways. The school is attempting to return to normal operations as soon as it is possible and safe.

The inspection drew out many features that were praised but a few elements emerged as areas to improve. These were related to induction, supervision and support processes for regular agency staff, and to ensure medication processes are followed at all times. Through discussion it was agreed that the first visit would look to enable myself as Independent Visitor to gain a good understanding of processes, and begin to consider where the use of the social care common inspection framework outstanding elements could be used to support the school in the drive towards outstanding. In essence to provide support and challenge to aid the school in achieving outstanding status. The Headteacher explained that there was the intention to see the three leaders of the residential provision each visit a recently inspected Grade 1 provision to aid this, through a process of research based practice and it was agreed that this is a sensible course of action.

The Headteacher explained that the aims of the school were pursued through a collaborative and integrated approach to their collective work across the school, and the residential provision. There is a keenness to enable staff with the tools to reflect upon how residential experience enhances pupils' life experiences and skills. The details of the visit are contained in the subsequent pages.

Areas requiring action from previous visit

Actions	Comments from Provider	Verification from Independent Visitor
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This is the first Standard 20 Visit by Platinum Care Consultancy Ltd.

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people
 (This will be a review of thematic areas and/ or direct observation of childcare practice and systems)

Placement Updates:



In discussion with the Head of Residential Care it was clear that the feeling of empowerment and strategic inclusion is a vision shared with the Headteacher. The Head of Care was very keen to seek the views of the Independent Visitor on the current issues faced by the boarding provision and our meeting was very transparent.

The Residential provision is spread across three floors of the Richley building. The top floor comprises a flat that is used for the most independent and capable boarders, and accommodates up to 4 young people. It currently houses 4. The middle floor has a capacity of 12 boarders but bedrooms are currently operating as singles meaning that the current occupation is 8 students. At present there are 6 full time (4 nights weekly) and a further bedroom is allocated to 'short breaks' meaning that 2 other boarders share it across the week. On the ground floor a further level of accommodation supports boarders with higher needs, and a criterion used here means that pupils that cannot physically access the other two floors are housed here. There are currently 6 in total with 4 full time and 2 that again share a room across the week.

The different floors have very different populations in terms of needs and support required. On the ground floor there are a range of boarders that have high levels of need and are predominantly non-verbal. During my tour I observed these pupils during evening activities and witnessed first-hand the high levels of support given, but also the clear enjoyment of these activities expressed in boarders' body language, physical and emotional responses. Two boarders were engaged in art activities that staff shared with me. It is very clear that the compassionate support given by dedicated staff is pivotal in seeing boarders develop and enjoy their time.

In the middle floor the boarders have greater levels of communication and their interactions with staff and activities are structured accordingly. There are still significant complex needs and as such staff give individualised support to enable engagement and progress to be made. Once again boarders were observed very engaged in their activities that are very personalised, and several that were communicated with were keen to express how much they enjoyed boarding. I observed pupils enjoying a foot spa, using a sensory ball activity and other chosen activities. Given the level of sensory impairment, and complex needs for some, this was very impressive.

There is a strong focus on encouraging boarders to live as independently as possible in the top floor flat, with greater independence evident in the activities undertaken. In this level boarders were very keen to talk to me and informed me of their happiness in boarding. There was a strong focus on music enjoyment and dancing in this floor. There was a sense of mutual respect and joy upon meeting these pupils. The structure of the three floors enables pupils to transition to higher levels of independence, and it is clear that this has transformed pupils' experiences and is visibly increasing their confidence.

	<p>In discussion the Head of Residential Care explained a system called 'Tapestry' to me, and demonstrated how it is used to capture the residential experience for all pupils. Whilst it was made clear to me that this is a work in progress, there has been good buy-in from staff, and I saw staff on all floors using recording devices (iPads etc) to chronicle the wide range of activities taking place. The Head of Care showed me the system live online for several pupils and explained that it was under a trial phase at present. All staff have access to it to record experiences (therapists, habitation, teaching staff and a limited number of parents). It creates a visual chronological record of pupils' experience, and has the capacity to move record keeping to a paperless system with genuine power. This could include care plans and risk assessments. This means that, at present, there is a degree of duplication with paper records, but this is to be expected whilst the system is trialled.</p> <p>The Head of Residential Care is passionate in her belief in the potential of Tapestry, and it is clear that it is showing signs of being a simple and effective tool that has great capacity. In discussion it was suggested that it may benefit from a review by Governors, and to make sure that all systems that can be, are co-ordinated through Tapestry. It was felt to be important to define its purpose for staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders. It was further suggested that it be used to capture boarders' comments, with a suggestion that a pen picture at the start of the process could act as a baseline, to very clearly demonstrate impact over time. The Head of Residential Care suggested that it could link to school systems through Earwig. The Independent Visitor advised that it could be useful to decide upon the intended use of Tapestry and to make sure it is clear to all what the purpose is.</p>
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How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.

<p>Standards: 11, 15.1, 15.3</p>	<p>Safeguarding: Since the last independent visit in term 3 there have been no incidents that have required external referral. Safeguarding meetings take place every week and involve a wide range of fully trained designated safeguarding leads from all parts of the school. This includes all managers, and is chaired by the Senior DSL of the school. This meeting is undertaken set against a formal agenda, and there is discussion around incidents, potential referrals, and updates on any prior incidents. Discussion takes place related to any concerns that have been raised through the internal alert system. There is regular open discussion on the impact of any unexpected behaviours in pupils. This is strong practice that keeps all leaders informed of any possibility that may need discussion. Morning and evening handover ensures that staff are aware of and act on any issues immediately. The 'My Concern' system generates a quick, accessible means of assessment for all staff, and is of particular help to the on call DSL for residential sleepover.</p> <p>The Head of Residential Care explained the care taken to ensure that medication is administered appropriately by the nursing team and healthcare assistants. Since the recent OFSTED inspection there has been a positive and immediate response to its recommendation related to medication processes. The Head of Residential Care explained that medication audits have been increased to see a weekly regularity when it had been monthly before. This response adds depth to the strong safeguarding processes and is, in my view, evidence of a determination to ensure all areas of the operations at Linden Lodge are of a high standard. Staff are aware of what to do if they have any concerns, up to and including who the named safeguarding Governor is. I am therefore confident that safeguarding systems are well designed and implemented to ensure pupils thrive in a nurturing and secure environment.</p>
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Mandatory Areas

Topic	Comments
<p>Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes 12.8, 15.6</p>	<p>The Head of Residential Care explained that there have been no missing episodes and no exclusions since the last independent visit that took place in term 3. The extremely secure premises, and high levels of attention to detail in all aspects of care, as well as the supportive relationships that I witnessed mean that pupils that attend boarding are very well looked after. It was very clear that staff really know their boarders, and that the boarding experience is a very packed one that means pupils are fully occupied at all times. The enjoyment of boarding came across strongly and this translates itself into high levels of attendance and a feeling of being ‘at home’.</p> <p>Attendance figures in this period showed that attendance for boarding students is running at 92.73%, compared to the whole school figure of 88.43%. Unauthorised absence for the school is running at a low 0.85%, and authorised absence currently sits at 10.6%. These figures illustrate a positive impact upon attendance for pupils that attend the boarding provision. Use of the ‘Tapestry’ record system in being able to showcase the impact of boarding on attendance was discussed, and advice was given to consider ways in which boarding helps pupils to increase and maintain these high levels of attendance.</p>
<p>Complaints 18</p>	<p>The Head of Residential Care stated that there have been no complaints since the last independent visit in term 3. It was explained that contact with families is regular and appropriate to the needs of the boarders. There is a senior member of the residential care staff on site at all times, including for every overnight shift, and this means that staff can be contacted at all times if needed.</p> <p>It has been agreed that at the next Standard 20 visit in term 5, a consultation process with a selection of parents will be arranged.</p>
<p>Sanctions 12</p>	<p>The Head of Residential Care explained that there have been no sanctions in the residential provision since the last independent visit. The boarding operation is based on positive behaviour support, and this has the impact of preventing the need for sanctions. The structure of the boarding provision, with graduated levels of independence, means that living is actively encouraged where possible. In my tour I witnessed this varied level of support, and saw at first-hand how supportive staff are in their direct work with boarders.</p> <p>In the case of boarders with highest level of need, activity is extremely hands on, and responsive to all boarders’ identified needs. Many of the boarders at this stage are non-verbal, and the work of the staff is responsive to visual cues and signs of enjoyment that pupils are capable of. As the level of support needed drops, then the level of independence increases, and the manner of behavioural support changes to meet these needs. All levels have in common the principle that pupils’ needs dictate the activities used, and the intensity of this support is well matched to that need. As a result, sanctions are almost never needed, as behavioural changes are anticipated and negativity avoided. There are clear expectations that are reinforced through conversations. This applies to handover to and from school provision twice daily and there is a home school diary that is used regularly to ensure clear communications about any events of note.</p>

<p>Physical Intervention 12</p>	<p>The nature of the needs of boarders means that there are sensible precautions in place to manage bumps and near misses. As many pupils have high levels of need related to sensory impairments, there is a system in use entitled 'trailing to the left'. This is closely linked to the positive management of behaviour and means that physical intervention is very rarely required.</p> <p>The Head of Residential Care explained sensible and proportionate recording systems using the Tapestry system which are managed through carefully created accident forms. Given their needs, boarders are very well cared for. The Head of Residential Care explained that there had been no incidents requiring physical intervention since the last independent visit.</p>
<p>Risk Assessments 5.1, 6.3, 10.2, 15.9</p>	<p>As part of this initial visit I sampled two risk assessment documents. These are detailed living documents that are updated once a school year at a minimum, but are added to and adapted as often as needed. They are an integral part of the 'all about me' folder that contains the detailed care plan for each pupil.</p> <p>Feedback was given to suggest that an area that could be considered would be to insert, into the very helpful summary for each boarder at the front of the overall planning document, a section related to key risks for each pupil. This could include what form the risk takes, events that may take place, and what staff can do to both watch out for signs of risk and how they can proactively prevent problems by responding early to events to support young people's needs and safety. This would have the added benefit of speeding up processes of induction and support for agency staff as recommended by OFSTED.</p> <p>Feedback was also given related to a signature sheet for staff after adaptations to a risk assessment, in that it needed to be signed by all staff that work with the young people.</p>
<p>Care Plans 10.2, 21</p>	<p>Detailed care plans are contained in the 'all about me' folder for each boarder. They are thorough and contain a very helpful summary at the front. This contains some very useful sections, including morning routines, evening routines and effective strategies for each young person. Following this summary there is greater detail inside the document folder.</p> <p>Examples of support material contained in these plans included placemats for staff working with pupils at meal times to support health needs that relate to visual impairment, a dyson mat and guard that enables help from staff as well as ensuring the safety of the young person, whilst promoting independence wherever possible. There are links to 1:1 work and personal learning goals that then go into the Tapestry system.</p> <p>The plans are reviewed at least annually, and the Head of Residential Care explained that consideration is being given as to whether this should be more often. It was clear that the possible use of the Tapestry system may have a bearing on this, and I will look to support further at the next standard 20 visit.</p>

Premises

Standards: 6, 7, 15.12

During this visit I was given an extended tour of all three floors of the boarding provision. All three are appropriately spacious, light, airy and are intelligently organised with the needs of the residents in mind. This means that, as different needs are serviced, there are differences in furniture and layout, but they are all well considered.

Bedrooms are personalised, and appropriately furnished. Bathrooms are clean and safe. Where required there are low level beds that are intended as safe zones, but on upper floors bedrooms are suited to the intention of independent living.

Communal spaces have appropriate resources for recreation, that are both age and need appropriate, and are well used by staff. I saw evidence of young people enjoying them when I met most boarders during the visit. The premises are in very good order with any maintenance undertaken promptly. The premises are well used by staff and support the boarders well. There is a warmth of community present that illustrates the passion of staff to ensure high levels of support to the boarders.

Consultations Supporting this Visit.

Standards: 4,10,13,17,21,22.

None undertaken at this visit but I hope to complete parental consultations in term 5.

Thematic Areas : Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards

Standard	Evidence / Observation
Standard 13: Leadership & Management	None undertaken in this visit as it is the first Standard 20 undertaken by Platinum Care Consultancy.

Summary of Visit

This has been an inspiring first Standard 20 visit to the School. I am impressed with the commitment of all staff that I have spent time with to see the residential provision move forward in a way that preserves the high standards in place and uses the advice given both by the recent OFSTED inspection, and through this visit. It is clear to me that there is an appetite for external views and a wish to take advice on board to constantly improve.

I would like to thank the Headteacher and the Head of Residential Care, along with all the staff and pupils that I met, for such a warm welcome. I was very pleased that the staff, including the Headteacher, welcomed suggestions, and I can see very clearly that pupils' best interests are at the centre of planning.

I am very much looking forward to my next visit and hope that the process we have begun can see my visits used to support the school as it moves forward.

Name: Mark Goode **Date:** 22.03.22

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT

Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<p><u>Risk Assessments and Care Planning</u> To consider inserting an additional section in the care plan introduction section related to key risks for each pupil and suggested staff actions.</p> <p><i>SCCIF Outstanding Criteria: Professional practice results in sustained improvement to the lives of children. Highly effective planning manages and minimises risks inside and outside of the school. Where children are new to the school, any risks are well understood and are being significantly reduced</i></p>	<p>Individual Care Plans – All About Me are reviewed July/September then shared with parents. Adding a section outlining key risks would be very beneficial. The section has been added to our template ready for reviews later next term</p>	<p>Term 5 2022</p>
<p><u>Medication Audits</u> Embed the recently introduced weekly medication checks.</p> <p><i>SCCIF Outstanding Criteria: Leaders and managers know their strengths and weaknesses well and can provide evidence of improvement over a sustained period.</i></p>	<p>In response to the recent inspection recommendation weekly medication audits are taking place. Checks are completed by the Head and Deputy Head of Care with support from the Clinical Lead.</p>	<p>Term 5 2022</p>
<p><u>Record Keeping of Impact on Life Opportunities</u> Conduct an evaluation of the use of the Tapestry system with the support of Governors if possible, to enable the journeys of pupils to be captured fully from start to finish, demonstrating the sustained impact boarding has.</p> <p><i>SCCIF Outstanding Criteria: The experience of staying at the school enhances children’s life opportunities. For children with the most complex needs, staff are able to evidence the sustained benefit they have had in making a difference to the lives of children in their care.</i></p>	<p>Tapestry has enabled us to build a record of young people’s experiences, development and journey in residential. Tapestry continues to be embedded into practice with the next phase sharing access with parents taking place Term 5 2022.</p> <p>An evaluation of the system will be arranged with our parent Governor next term.</p>	<p>Term 6 2022</p>

Provider's Comments

Name: Jhenni Izquierdo, Head of Residential Care

A very pleasing report to read. Mark managed to capture so much information and good practice in this first visit. We very much look forward to forming a strong working relationship in the future.

Section 12 Physical Interventions – we would like to confirm our safeguarding platform My Concern is used to record accidents.

Date: 28-03-2022

Name: Deborah Rix, Headteacher

This was a very informative familiarisation visit focusing on key themes and recommendations from our recent inspection.

Date: