

## Standard 3 Visit

<b>Name of Service</b>	<b>Linden Lodge School</b>
<b>Date of previous visit</b>	<b>20/09/2023</b>
<b>Date of this visit</b>	<b>04/12/2023</b>
<b>Standard 3 Visitor</b>	<b>Mark Goode</b>
<b>Time of visit</b>	<b>14.00</b>
<b>Visit Supported by</b>	<p><b>Danny Sinclair – Head of Residential</b>  <b>Vicky Watson – Deputy Residential Childcare Manager</b>  <b>Sarah Norris – Co-Headteacher responsible for Residential</b></p>

### 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

Upon arrival for this Standard 3 visit, I was greeted by the three Residential Leaders who informed me that there had been a very recent (the week before my arrival) OFSTED Inspection of the residential setup. The leaders were very clear in not sharing the outcome of the inspection, but reflected upon the experience – stating that the outcome had not dropped from the previous inspection rating, had built upon it, and that they were pleased with the outcome.

I commented that this was validation of the hard work of the leaders and staff in the past 18 months or so, and illustrated the good decisions that had been made over time related to the way the residential setup is organised, how the key leadership decisions have been made, and captured the high quality in the care over time. We spent time discussing the inspection, and the detail is captured in the consultations section lower down this report.

In terms of the context of the residential setup, I was informed that there are still 14 residential boarders and that a 15<sup>th</sup> is due to arrive soon. There have been some medical considerations to resolve before commencing boarding, and this seems likely to delay the start date until after the Christmas break.

I was also informed that Staffing has remained stable since my last visit and that this sense of stability has been important in making sure that the service is secure and calm.

During this visit I spent time with all three leaders together, conducted the mandatory checks alongside the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager, undertook a further consultation with the Head of Residential (in which we considered the next steps for Linden Lodge’s Residential setup), and called a parent of a boarder. As well as this, I spent time in all parts of the residential buildings meeting with staff and residents to catch up on events and share in their time.

### Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider’s Response and Verification by Independent Visitor
<p><b><u>Leadership and Management</u></b> It is recommended that work continues related to the Residential Improvement Plan and use of the SCCIF to drive the service forward, as well as pressing forward with discussions related to the Wheel of Independence and Life Skills Challenges. Then to be ready to share the documents and plans as they stand in the next Standard 3 visit in term 2.</p>	<p><b><u>Response:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people’s progress is regularly monitored using various platforms and data. We will be evidencing young people’s progress, doing case studies to demonstrate the young person’s progress.</li> <li>• QR Code recording system will demonstrate the data and how the young people are monitored during the night.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Verification in visit</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I met with the Head of Residential and we discussed the next steps in all of the areas listed, See the recommendations section for further details.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Care Planning</b> For the detailed and comprehensive review process to be completed and Plans available for scrutiny in my next Standard 3 visit.</p>	<p><b>Response:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be available for sharing on Mark's next visit.</li> <li>• We will demonstrate the young people's progress, regularly monitored using various platforms and data.</li> <li>• Case studies will be shared at Mark's next visit.</li> </ul> <p><b>Verification in visit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These have been updated in the September review and have had quality assurance checks.</li> <li>• This is a strong process of termly updates. See the mandatory section for details.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Building plan</b> To continue the development work and enable a series of consultations to take place related to the plans into the new calendar year when I attend for the Standard 3 visit in term 3.</p>	<p><b>Response:</b> The improvement plan for Boarding is currently in process and will be available for sharing on Mark's next visit.</p> <p><b>Verification in visit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An update on the Buildings Development Plan was viewed and has been the subject of scrutiny in the recent OFSTED inspection. The plans are moving forward, and I was again given a tour that is covered in the mandatory section of this report.</li> </ul>

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

The Head of Residential once again informed me that there have been no incidents that have required referral to external support services since my last visit in term 1. I met with and spoke to the boarder that had spent time in hospital earlier in the year, and found them to be back on great form. The contact that had been maintained on a regular basis across the summer and into last term by staff and peers has supported reintegration very well.

As a result of this visit I remain of the opinion that safeguarding practices are strong at Linden Lodge and I have no concerns.

Mandatory Areas	
Topic	Comments
<p><b>Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes</b> 20.9</p>	<p>The Head of Residential explained that there have again been no missing episodes and no exclusions since the last Standard 3 visit.</p> <p>Attendance figures for this year to date for boarding students is running at 92.5% and the figure for day pupils is 86.4%. These attendance figures remain more positive for boarders, indicating that boarding helps to increase attendance. In addition, the absence figures illustrate the positive impact of attending boarding as residents' absence rates currently sit at 7.5% authorised, and 0% unauthorised, with comparative day pupil absences of 13.3% and 0.2%</p>
<p><b>Complaints</b> 19.1, 19.2, 19.3</p>	<p>The Deputy Residential Childcare Manager informed me that there have been no complaints since my last visit took place in term 1.</p> <p>During the week of the OFSTED inspection the parent questionnaire was very complimentary related to the residential setup. The Head of Residential explained</p>

	<p>that the gathering of parent voice is a regular feature and any ongoing discussions are filed and responded to. There is also a weekly Monday meeting related to events within the residential cohort, student surveys and activity evaluations.</p> <p>This information is analysed by the Residential staff member. I suggested this was all strong evidence of a highly effective service and should be captured in the SCCIF audit that is underway. This evidence can help to showcase how the residential service supports well-being. There is much evidence contained in these areas of work that showcase the quality that takes place, and we discussed the need to make sure it is all captured.</p>
<p><b>Sanctions</b> 20.6</p>	<p>The Head of Residential informed me that there have been no sanctions applied since my last visit in term 1. The support I observed in this visit was extremely warm and comfortable, thereby reflecting the fact that sanctions simply are not needed generally.</p>
<p><b>Restraint (including restrictive interventions)</b> 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7</p>	<p>The Deputy Residential Childcare Manager and Head of Residential both explained that there have been again no occasions when restrictive interventions have been used since my last visit in term 1. The oversight of the residents is supportive and proactive, therefore negating the need for these interventions.</p>
<p><b>Risk Assessments</b> Appendix B (11,16)</p>	<p>During this visit I undertook a sampling exercise related to a range of student plans and risk assessments and spoke to the Head of Residential about review processes.</p> <p>Plans contain the overall targets for the school for each resident (from their EHCP), and Residential staff attend reviews with other key staff (teachers, therapy team, behaviour team) 6 times a year. During these meetings staff contribute to the overall review process fully. There is high quality reflection work undertaken.</p>
<p><b>Placement Plans</b> 7.2</p>	<p>The reviews are skills based and pathway led (based upon the status of each young person). This is done at the same time as the general care review and all paperwork is updated concurrently</p>
<p><b>Suitability of the building, furnishings &amp; external environment.</b></p>	
<p>The Leadership team explained a series of events that took place during the recent OFSTED inspection related to Fire Systems. The events were initiated by the sharing of a reflective report on fire drills, and led to a deep dive into Fire Safety during the inspection. A practice fire drill then took place during the inspection that illustrated the quality of the systems in use.</p> <p>As part of work related to the events in the inspection, a new Fire Safety motherboard has now been fitted, along with a full review of all systems.</p> <p>The inspection commented upon the fact that upgrading the buildings was an area for development in the previous inspection, and that work was ongoing. This commentary was favourable and follows on from the work that has been ongoing and continues related to building developments. The Head of Residential shared the current action plan with me as part of this visit, and upon reading it, it is clear that the areas for development have been well planned, and given priority status. The inclusion of photographs of the condition of the areas being worked upon is a great idea and gives the plan real flavour. The work continues but much has already been accomplished.</p>	

During my tour I was shown a recently upgraded activity hub with a range of sensory play equipment, computer consoles, hide out tent, music play area and lots of games and toys. The staff take great pride in ensuring that the premises are fit for the needs and interests of the residents.

### **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.

#### **Consultations with Co-Headteacher, Head of Residential and Deputy Residential Childcare Manager.**

The main focus of the initial part of this visit was spent discussing the events of the recent OFSTED inspection. It was clear that the events related to the Fire Safety systems were of concern to the leaders, but that the process that had taken place had led to a solid outcome and some work that has supported the Buildings Development Plan as well.

There were very positive reflections and feedback from the Inspector related to systems for supervisions, and whilst there are still aspects of the buildings that require ongoing attention, the quality of the plan and ongoing work was noted.

We discussed how this visit had come prior to the completion of the SCCIF audit, and that the inspection had shown how useful a process this can be for the preparations ahead of the next time one happens. Areas to consider were discussed, among them:

- The framework for capturing parents' views could be enhanced to make it a regular feature that is simple to showcase.
- To continue to showcase how the buildings are receiving attention, and access any funding streams that may be utilised.
- To continue the process of consideration of how to show pupil/resident progress as clearly as possible.

Above all else, to utilise this process (and the required annual review of the Residential Setup as required by Standard 3 of the NMS), to be as prepared as possible to show the quality on offer. Having a live audit of the SCCIF enables constant evaluation to become a part of the day to day creed.

In this the Head of Residential and I reflected upon ways to complete the audit, and from the resultant RAG rated evidence base produce an ongoing action plan. I offered to support this with a consultation related to it in term 3.

Other aspects of the evidence that ought to be captured in the SCCIF audit were discussed and included:

- Any Governors' reports as they are produced.
- The Deputy Residential Child care Manager showed me a bespoke independence living framework that is being produced. I offered to review this as a consultation, or to look at it in term 3.

#### **Time spent with Boarders and Staff in this visit**

I 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. Some were eating, whilst others were taking part in things they had chosen. These included sensory toys and music in the communal spaces, or simply enjoying time in their own rooms.

Staff reflected upon recent events and activities that they and the boarders had undertaken, including a visit to a light trail at Cannizaro House on Wimbledon Common and an eventful Barn Dance that was held in the school grounds. The staff and residents were very animated when explaining how this had been arranged, what people were wearing and the fact that parents had also attended.

In both of these it was clear how much the boarders had enjoyed it, and I commented that this is all great evidence for the impact of residential (and the evidence can and should be used in all audits).

**Parent Consultation undertaken with a parent of a resident that is set to leave in July 2024.**

Following this Standard 3 visit, I contacted the parents of a boarder that is set to leave at the end of this academic year, and the parent that I spoke to explained that she was really happy at Linden Lodge, even though the move into the school and boarding is a relatively recent thing. The former residential home that she had been attending had a remit up to 18 years old, and this necessitated a move to another premises.

The parent explained that the main aim of residential attendance has been to support growing independence, and also that it is a real positive for the family to have support in a range of ways.

The parent informed me that she found the staff to be brilliant, with great communication, and that they are extremely interactive and caring in their support of her daughter. The interactions between the staff and the boarders show how well looked after they are and they have no concerns at all.

The parent was also happy to share that her daughter is now 19 and is approaching the end of her time at Linden Lodge. As such there is work taking place to identify next steps and respite support, and that Linden Lodge are offering helpful support with this.

Overall the parent was happy to share how content both she and her daughter have been in the time that she has attended Linden Lodge.

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

Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision
<p>This was an extremely positive visit in which the leaders shared the recent experiences of the OFSTED inspection and the fact that a positive outcome has been the result. This is richly deserved and fully validates the decisions over leadership that have been made over the past year or so.</p> <p>The staff that I met, alongside the residents, were happy and fully engaged with each other and clearly enjoy their stays in Richley House. Care is of a high standard, and this was fully captured in the recent OFSTED visit, based upon the feedback that was shared with me.</p> <p>I would once again like to thank everyone at Linden Lodge for their continued welcome into the school each time that I visit. I would also like to congratulate the whole staff team for their success. In particular congratulations go to Sarah, Danny, Vicky and the residential staff.</p>

I am looking forward to my subsequent visits and continuing to support the staff team as they look to build upon this recent outcome. I would also like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas break.

**Name: Mark Goode**

**Date: 07/12/2023**

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

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Comments from Provider</b>	<b>Expected Completion Date</b>
<p><b><u>Leadership and Management - Next Steps</u></b>            For the residential leaders to complete the SCCIF audit against robust evidence as discussed in this visit. Then to incorporate feedback from the recent OFSTED visit into the plans that grow out of this process.</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>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 3 2024</p>
<p><b><u>Action plans for Building Developments</u></b>            For the action plan to continue being worked upon to maintain and improve the buildings.</p> <p><b><u>SCCIF (Good Criteria): The effectiveness of leaders and managers</u></b>            The Co-headteacher ensures that the physical environment is maintained to a high standard, is comfortable and meets the needs of the children. Any damage or wear and tear is quickly and regularly repaired.</p>	<p>Updated action plan will show progress with building works and improved environment.</p>	<p>Term 3 2024</p>
<p><b><u>Other leadership developments</u></b>            For the Residential Leaders to continue the development of the Independence Living framework and for the notes of the next Governors' visit to be shared with me at my next visit</p> <p><b><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The overall experiences and progress of children</u></b>            Professional practice consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained improvement to the lives of children. Professional practice responds positively to children's complex and changing needs. There are examples of excellent practice that are worthy of wider dissemination.</p>	<p>Development of independent living frame work, will be shown on the next visit.</p> <p>Governors visit to she shown at the next visit.</p>	<p>Term 3 2024</p>



### Head of Residential's Comments

Thank you so much for your positive feedback in the report. I really appreciate the details you have included about areas we have developed and how the Richley House has developed.  
Thank you for the time you spent, with the young people, listening to their participation in the residential activities.

**Name: Danny Sinclair**

**Date: 18.12.2023**

### Head Teachers' Comments

I am delighted to read this report which strikes the right balance between highlighting our successes and identifying our next steps. We value the input from Mark and are particularly pleased that he has recognised the review we have undertaken across the whole of residential provision.

**Name: Sarah Norris**

**Date: 19.12.2023**

### Formal Response from the Governing Body, trustees, or proprietor of the school

The purpose of the visit is clearly set out and the report is well written.

It is helpful that the IV is using case studies to track the progress of young people. That reflects the focus of the Governors' method to also track case studies and it adds hard evidence of the progress of children at Richley House.

There is helpful evidence that children at Richley House are well cared for and are safe. That tallies with the views of the parents, Governors and the emerging findings from OfSTED.

The focus on the physical state of the premises and the plans to improve that is helpful and assists Governors to monitor that process as well

The tracking of plans for the development of Richley House is also helpful.

Residential staff and leaders should be commended for the good quality of care and education provided to children at Richley House.

**Name: Kieran Travers**

**Date: 12 January 2024**