



Standard 3 Visit

Name of Service	Linden Lodge School
Date of previous visit	25/01/2024
Date of this visit	19/03/2024
Standard 3 Visitor	Mark Goode
Time of visit	14.00
Visit Supported by	Vicky Watson – Deputy Residential Childcare Manager Danny Sinclair – Head of Residential Sarah Norris – Co-Headteacher responsible for Residential

About the Independent Visitor

Visiting the residential provision today is Mark Goode. Mark has worked in the Education sector for the past 24 years, leading in multiple schools and alternative providers with experience as both Headteacher and Executive Headteacher. Mark spent time as one of Her Majesty's Inspectors with OFSTED. Mark is experienced in leading bespoke education covering ages 4 to 19 across the full academic range for pupils with wide-ranging complex additional, special and health needs. Mark's strong track-record of inspection processes has helped organisations with low ratings, as well as both 'Good' and 'Outstanding' ratings. Mark undertakes visits on behalf of Platinum Care Consultancy in a number of residential School settings. These include settings designated for care and education of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties, sensory impairment, physical disabilities and health conditions.

Standard 3 Visits

INTRODUCTION: Standard 3 - Monitoring by Independent Visitors (as of 5th September 2022).

3.1 The Governing Body, trustees, or proprietor of the school appoint a representative who is independent of the leadership and management of the school to visit the residential provision six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. The representative is vetted in line with the school's safe recruitment policy, in accordance with the safer recruitment requirements set out in Keeping children safe in education, and has the skills and authority to effectively carry out this role

3.2 Monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include:

- **conversations with children, the senior management team and staff;**
- **conversations with social workers where relevant;**
- **conversations with parents/carers where relevant;**
- **checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, bullying, restraint (including restrictive interventions), risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children including in relation to residential provision;**
- **evaluation of the quality of the provision and effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded;**
- **Assessment of the suitability and physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the residential provision and the external environment.**

3.3 Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the Headteacher (or school equivalent) and where applicable the Governing Body, trust, or proprietor.

- **Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body) within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary. The Governing Body, trustees, or proprietor of the school should record a formal response to each written report.**
- **Monitoring reports and formal responses should be retained by the school and made available during an inspection and, on request, shared with any placing authorities and with the local authority where the school is located.**

3.4 The Headteacher (or school equivalent), Governing Body, trustees, or proprietor carry out, and record in writing, once each year: a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for residential pupils, in relation to:

- **its Statement of Purpose;**
- **its staffing policy;**
- **the placement plans for individual children; and**
- **an internal assessment of its compliance with these standards and**
- **actions it will undertake to ensure compliance.**

There is also an intention to review other thematic areas in discussion with the school:

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

During visits opportunities are also taken to:

- **Provide opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet me (in private if they wish).**
- **Carry out observations of the care provided, or systems being used.**

Introduction and Context for this visit

Linden Lodge is a day and residential Special Needs School for pupils with Vision and Sensory Impairment. It occupies a 3-acre campus close to the centre of London and has a range of specialist departments. The school roll has not changed significantly since my last visit.

Upon arrival for this Standard 3 visit, I was greeted by the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager and the Co-Headteacher for Residential and we undertook an immediate catch-up consultation. The details of this are contained in the different sections of the report below. This includes follow up on the recommended areas from my last visit and other developments, alongside the Standard 3 mandatory checks as normal. I have also sought to speak to the parents of two recent additions to the boarding cohort, and at the time of typing this report I have been able to reach one, and have undertaken a detailed consultation.

In terms of the context of the residential setup, I was informed that there have been 2 recent new starters in Residential and it was explained that one of these has seen a parent feeling that things could have progressed faster, the intention being to share why the process is needed to take the requisite time to ensure that placements are fully set up to ensure the best chance of sustainability.

There are also other placements that seem to be in process for new pupils to the school and others seeking to expand their time in residential. All in all, there is a demand for placements and extended stays – which is a positive indicator.

I also spent time in all parts of the residential buildings meeting with staff and residents to catch up on events and share in their time. I was informed that there are to be three leavers this summer and I will be looking to review onward placements and planning in my next visit.

Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and Verification by Independent Visitor
<p><u>Independence Living Framework</u> For the Head of Residential to ensure that the new framework is available for scrutiny during my visit in term 4.</p>	<p><u>Response</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independence Living Framework will be available for Mark to see on his next visit. • Highest quality of care will be sustained and reviewed regularly. <p><u>Verification in this visit</u> The Residential Leaders explained that there is a process taking place presently that sees the Independence Framework being supported with a piece of work alongside the Occupational Therapy Lead. The aim is to see this piece of work have an impact upon the wider school, as well as Residential, and I will follow up developments in my next visit in term 5.</p>
<p><u>Maintenance Plan discussions</u> For Leaders to continue the planning for the use of the recent donation and add to the maintenance development plan.</p>	<p><u>Response</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The maintenance development will continue and improvements evidenced at Mark's next visit. • Any damaged or wear and tear is quickly repaired or replaced. <p><u>Verification in this visit</u> During this visit, the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager shared a copy of a recently produced overview of 'repairs and maintenance to Richley House' (the Residential block). This overview has been shared with the CEO and other governors and makes clear the priorities for maintenance and development. It includes a deep clean of the exterior and fascia, extensive interior work for the ground floor entrance hall, corridors, activity rooms,</p>

	toilets, kitchens and lounges, bathrooms, bedrooms; middle floor corridors, bedrooms, lounges, bathrooms, games rooms and bedrooms. Overall it is a very extensive range of work that is planned. There is a fund that has been allocated to these developments and I will be happy to follow up on developments into the Summer term and beyond.
<p><u>Consultations for term 4</u> For the Head of Residential to make advance arrangements to facilitate consultations in term 4 with the parents of the newest boarder and the Independent Person in my next visit.</p>	<p><u>Response</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for Mark to contact newest boarder's parents at his next unannounced visit. Maintain professional working relationships with school and partner agencies. This will ensure the best possible care, experiences and futures for children and young people. <p><u>Verification in this visit</u></p> <p>This has been attempted for 2 boarders in and after this visit. At the time of the production of this report I have reached one and undertaken a detailed consultation.</p>

How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.

During this visit I was informed that there have been no incidents that have resulted in support being requested from external services since my last visit in term 3.

We discussed an event that took place where a resident had briefly locked themselves in a bathroom during an overnight stay to avoid waking night staff but the staff utilised positive behaviour strategies and distractions to resolve this quickly. Other than that, there have been no concerns and boarders' needs are well catered for. I have no concerns and remain of the opinion that safeguarding practices are strong at Linden Lodge.

Mandatory Areas	
Topic	Comments
<p>Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes 20.9</p>	<p>The Deputy Residential Childcare Manager explained that there have again been no missing episodes and no exclusions since the last Standard 3 visit in term 3.</p> <p>Attendance figures since my last visit in term 2 have averaged at 92.5% for boarders, with a corresponding figure for day pupils of 90.1%. These attendance figures remain slightly more positive for boarders, indicating that boarding helps to increase attendance.</p>
<p>Complaints 19.1, 19.2, 19.3</p>	<p>I was informed that there have been no complaints since my last visit took place in term 3. Having spent time in both floors alongside the staff and boarders I am very clear why this is. The care on offer is very strong and both responds to boarders' needs and prepares well to meet them in a proactive sense. The way the newest parent reflected on the process of transition and support is a clear indication of why complaints remain very unlikely in my view.</p>
<p>Sanctions 20.6</p>	<p>I was once again informed that there have been no sanctions applied since my last visit in term 3. The time I spent with residents and staff was filled with some very positive interaction between staff and boarders, as well as warm greetings for me from several residents. Sanctions are thereby not needed in general.</p>

Restraint (including restrictive interventions) 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7	The detail shared in the safeguarding section above is a perfect example of how events are managed to prevent the need for any form of physical intervention. This oversight is managed calmly and in a friendly fashion that is built upon a clear understanding of boarders' needs. This prevents escalation and therefore means these sorts of interventions are exceptionally rare.
Risk Assessments Appendix B (11,16)	During this visit the Deputy Residential Childcare Manger explained that there has recently been a change introduced to see a review box inserted into plans and Risk Assessments that is to be signed every half term to illustrate how reviews have taken place. This is also being done for Positive Behaviour Plans for each boarder. All three elements are to be considered every 6 weeks, and these reviews are set to involve class teachers to make sure there is mirrored and consistent practice.
Placement Plans 7.2	This is a very comprehensive system that is in the process of being implemented. I will be seeking to review a sample for all three for a range of boarders in my next visit.

Suitability of the building, furnishings & external environment.

During this visit I undertook a walk around of the premises, and noted a fresh display for Easter in the foyer, a repainted games space on the first floor and a trial breakfast bar that is used for boarders to serve their own cereals and juice from dispensers. This is an interim version using a few tables, but it is intended that the redevelopment programme that I have reviewed higher up this report will see this made into a more permanent fixture. The boarders explained their views on this and these are being added to the plans.

There has also been a start made to repainting some areas of the Residential setup in line with the redevelopment programme, and I was shown a gallery of canvas artwork that has been made by all boarders and placed in the stairwell between the ground and first floor. This adds a very nice personal touch and lovely colours that match the venue's statements colours.

I look forward to reporting back upon developments to the premises that will enhance the provision from its already strong position.

Consultations Supporting this Visit.

Under Standard 3 this is stated as meaning that conversations with children, senior management team, staff and parents/carers and social workers, where relevant.

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

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

In addition, the leaders explained that the CEO of the Trust was very pleased with the recent OFSTED Inspection, and responded positively to the planned developments as shared by the team. The numbers in Residential are under consideration and the team are looking to see how numbers that benefit from staying can be increased whilst ensuring that the high standards of care are retained. In addition to the use of the recent donation to support buildings redevelopment, I was also informed that there is to be consideration given to upgrading to a ULEZ compliant minibus and this is a very sensible development.

In summary it was explained that the current priorities are to ensure standards remain high alongside staff recruitment to support numbers effectively and develop the premises. There is to be a careers event that will be held next term and I hope to be able to reflect upon this with parents in my consultations next term.

Time spent with Boarders and Staff in this visit

I once again toured the residential service and spent time with all residents in this visit. They were engaged in a range of activities across the two floors as boarding proceeded. I was present a little later than in some recent visits and observed the ground floor residents as they undertook some relaxation time with music playing and staff supporting their needs. The ground floor houses residents with higher level needs and as such these activities are more reliant on staff support at times. This was in evidence during this period.

The first floor saw a number of boarders engaged in a Lego session and most were making towers from sorted bricks. The boarders were very engaging and explained what they were doing to me, and that they were looking forward to Scouts later in the evening (the Scout Leader visits the Residential environment).

In addition, I was able to see three of the boarders take part in a swimming session in the on-site pool. They were extremely excited by this and it is a clear highlight for the pupils taking part. The staff on duty explained the therapeutic impact of the session and that the boarders all really look forward to it. This was evident in the response to the session that I observed.

Parent Consultation of a recently started boarder

Following this Standard 3 visit, I contacted the parents of a boarder that has very recently begun boarding. They explained that, although there had been frustration at aspects of the induction process being delayed (from their perspective), the overwhelming feeling is of a very positive experience so far.

The parent explained that their daughter has been a pupil at Linden Lodge since 2012 and as such has been a day student for all of that time. In fact, the view expressed was that (other than a few days with a grandparent), she has not stayed away from home for between 16 and 17 years. As a result of this, and cultural considerations owing to being a member of the Muslim faith, there was a great deal of soul searching that has gone into the decision to board for the whole family.

Given the circumstances it was perhaps not a surprise that the first night of boarding was somewhat tricky, and the parent reflected that contact with staff had been hard for a while, although it seems to be easier now.

The main reason for accessing boarding was explained as being to develop greater independence skills by attending. So far this has been positive, and the parent was keen to express that the fact that her daughter has not stayed away from home for such a long time means that the skill of the Residential Team is evident to her.

The parent stated that the use of photos to capture events, and increasing levels of communication has also helped the process for the family. She also explained that staff attention to detail has been strong and that her daughter came home from boarding very excited.

That having been said, the parent did express the view that she would have liked access to be quicker once the process had been agreed to, and that she would also like more details shared in the form of a timeline of events, toileting and a few other areas, but that overall the experience aligns with a view expressed by the staff before the placement started, in that it has been more positive than the parent had thought it might be.

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

Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision

This was a further positive visit in which the leaders have shown that they are far from complacent about the strengths of Residential after the recent inspection. They are committed to building upon the many strengths that exist in the Residential Setup, and are always keen to listen to constructive criticism.

The care on display was strong and the parental feedback bears this out as well.

I would like to thank everyone at Linden Lodge for their warm welcome during my I visit and I am looking forward to next term. I wish everyone a peaceful and happy Easter Holiday.

Name: Mark Goode

Date: 23/03/2024

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT

Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<p><u>Termly Reviews of Placement Plans. Risk Assessments and PBS Strategies</u> For the leaders to complete the new review processes and make a sample of all three processes of review available for scrutiny at my next visit.</p> <p><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The effectiveness of Leaders and Managers</u> Leaders and managers lead by example, innovate and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest quality care for children.</p>	<p>This will be shown to Mark on his next visit.</p>	<p>Term 5 2024</p>
<p><u>Maintenance Schedule and Independence Framework Collaboration</u> For both of these key areas of ongoing work to be further developed and available for review in my term 5 visit.</p> <p><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): How well Children are Helped and Protected</u> 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.</p>	<p>Updated and progress plan will be provided for Mark's next visit.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p>Next steps planning for upcoming leavers For the onward plans for the three residents that are due to leave Linden Lodge in the summer to be available for review at the term 5 visit.</p> <p>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The effectiveness of Leaders and Managers Leaders and managers develop and maintain professional relationships between the school and partner agencies that ensure the best possible care, experiences and futures for children.</p>	<p>On Mark's next visit, the plans will be available for Mark to view.</p> <p>To continue to meet as a team and maintain professional relationships between the school and other partner agencies, to ensure the best possible care for the young people.</p>	<p>Term 5 2024</p>
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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.
Thank you for the time you spent, with the young people, listening to their participation in residential activities and also how the staff work with the young people.

Name: Danny Sinclair

Date: 27th March 2024

Head Teacher's Comments

It is so beneficial to have the support of the Independent Visitor report for all that we do in the residential provision to support our strategic development and review.

Name: Sarah Norris

Date: 28th March 2024

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

Reading IV report 19 March

It is helpful to read the progress tracked by the Independent Visitor including the maintenance progress at Richley House. Governors should have a further report of that progress before the end of term.

The conclusion about the good quality care provided to boarders is clear and evidenced well. The outcomes of consultations with residents and a parent are helpful and add to the weight of the positive evidence.

Governors are grateful to the Independent Visitor for the diligence of the work and the quality of the reporting. Those reports add to the Governors' confidence that children at Richley House are safe and well cared for.

Name: Kieran Travers

Date: 15 April 2024