



## Standard 3 Visit

<b>Name of Service</b>	<b>Linden Lodge School</b>
<b>Date of previous visit</b>	<b>04/07/2024</b>
<b>Date of this visit</b>	<b>01/10/2024</b>
<b>Standard 3 Visitor</b>	<b>Mark Goode</b>
<b>Time of visit</b>	<b>14.30</b>
<b>Visit Supported by</b>	<p><b>Sarah Norris – Co-Headteacher responsible for Residential</b>  <b>Danny Sinclair – Head of Residential</b>  <b>Vicky Watson – Deputy Residential Childcare Manager</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 (last updated 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022, and reviewed as of 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024).

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

**3.2** Monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

During visits opportunities are also taken to:

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

### Introduction and Context for this visit

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

I arrived for this visit in the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the school year and was greeted by the Co-Head for Residential, as well as the Head of Residential and the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager. The immediate focus of the visit was the current context, and the leaders informed me that there are currently 15 boarders attending overnight stays, and an imminent increase to 17. There are 7 more prospective boarders that have expressed interest. We discussed the challenges of securing funding for some of these placements and that this has seen protracted delays in terms of start dates in some instances.

This visit was also preceded on the same day by a BBC film crew that were in school related to a new government initiative supporting health screening within residential special schools. The Co-Headteacher explained the events and that there was a projected screening of the report due a few days later. There is more detail on this in the consultations section of the report below. I toured the Residential provision and the leaders pointed out many features that have been worked upon since my last visit in term 6 of last year, before I undertook the mandatory checks that are required in a Standard 3 visit alongside the Head of Residential, and sought feedback from parents in the days following my visit. In addition to other consultations that I undertook in this visit, I agreed to consult with a visiting trainer that is supporting staff in enhancing their skillset for supporting young people that have suffered Brain injury. The Inset is scheduled for later this term and the Head of Residential has agreed to save materials and attempt to schedule a conversation between myself and the visitor for my next visit.

The Head of Residential informed me that there has been a promotion of a staff member to be a team leader (whom I agreed to speak to in my next visit related to this and the impact it is having), and that several staff are moving through their levelled Residential Qualifications. This is a reflection of a staff body with aspirations to be well qualified and meet the needs of boarders in all ways that they can. This report also contains reviews of several documents related to residential systems and processes.

### Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and Verification by Independent Visitor
<p><b><u>Building and Premises Developments</u></b> For the Leaders to implement the stated intentions related to the development of different parts of the buildings over the Summer Holidays.</p>	<p><b><u>Verification during this visit</u></b> During this visit the Residential Leaders explained a number of updates that have taken place related to the buildings. There is detail included below in the section of the mandatory areas that relate to buildings.</p>
<p><b><u>Onwards plans for the 3<sup>rd</sup> boarder</u></b> For the eventual destination for the final leaver as mentioned in the report above to be supported, and details to be available for me to review in my next visit in the Autumn term.</p>	<p><b><u>Verification during this visit</u></b> During this visit I enquired about the current situation for the boarder referenced from last year and was informed that as things currently stand, he has no onward place. I discussed the support that was offered, and the Head of Residential explained that this was right up until the end of term, and has continued since. Following the end of term, the Local Authority in question ceased the boarder's EHCP. The school has been attempting to support in searching for suitable accessible living arrangements but no professionals have come back to the school or family. The school stand available for support to the family's position that both</p>

education and a residential provision is needed. The school are continuing to support, and I agreed to follow up once again next term.

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

The Head of Residential informed me that there have once again been no issues of concern internally or requiring the support of external agencies related to the boarding cohort since my last visit in term 6 of last year. The review that I undertook of the care planning and risk assessment processes is a key indicator that there is an aversion to complacency of any sort at Linden Lodge. This is reflected in the positive supportive relationships with families and has been a recurring theme in all of my visits.

I have no concerns and remain of the opinion that safeguarding practices are strong at Linden Lodge.

### Mandatory Areas

Topic	Comments
<b>Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes</b> 20.9	<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 6 of last year.</p> <p>Attendance figures since my last visit in term 6 have averaged at 95.7% for boarders, with a corresponding figure for day pupils of 88.7%. These attendance figures remain more positive for boarders, indicating that boarding helps to increase attendance. There is also an increased % for the residential attendance on average at this stage of the year, which is another positive indicator.</p>
<b>Complaints</b> 19.1, 19.2, 19.3	<p>The Head of Residential informed me that there have been no complaints since the date of my last visit in term 6 of last year. There have been some instances where day to day management of contact with families has been required after clothing has been misplaced, but the strong working relationships that exist with families means that these occurrences have been managed well.</p>
<b>Sanctions</b> 20.6	<p>I was once again informed that there have been no sanctions applied since my last visit in term 6 of last year. The time I spent in the boarding space alongside staff and boarders illustrated the way support is offered and the mutual respect on show. My view is that this prevents the circumstances where sanctions may be needed.</p>
<b>Restraint (including restrictive interventions)</b> 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7	<p>I was once again informed that there have been no incidents since my last visit in term 6 that have required any restraint or restrictive intervention. I consider the likelihood of this taking place to be virtually nil based on this visit and the high level of interaction and mutual respect that exists between staff and residents.</p>
<b>Risk Assessments</b> Appendix B (11,16)	<p>During this visit I scrutinised a sample of care planning and risk assessment as provided by the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager. This was explained as being the general standard of the work expected and quality assured each term. The sample that I reviewed was of a very high standard with a wide ranging set of documents covering risk assessment, personal education plans and a very detailed set of key information on the boarders. This is held together as a pack entitled 'all about me'.</p>
<b>Placement Plans</b> 7.2	<p>This process is undertaken by the Head of Residential and the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager in all cases, and is ably supported by the team leaders. I explored staff capacity in relation to this, and the staff informed me that there is a willing staff team that supports the process and that staff are enabled with appropriate time to</p>

undertake these processes every 6 weeks. Staff all sign to confirm having read the documents each time there is a change.

### **Suitability of the building, furnishings & external environment.**

During this Standard 3 visit I undertook a full tour of the Residential Provision at Richley House, in part as a response to the recommendation that I made in my term 6 visit last year. The last OFSTED Inspection made some recommendations related to the regularity of upkeep of the premises, and the Co-Headteacher for Residential had explained that funding that had become available was being used across the Summer (and ongoing) to make sure that these funds were put to good use in the direction that OFSTED had suggested.

On the ground floor a new decoration scheme with a border has been created. This border is an attractive colour and is made of a hard-wearing material that will ensure longevity. There are now canvases made by the boarders on display in the main corridors (that formerly adorned a different space), and a new configuration of tables has been created (please see the consultations section related to time spent with the staff and boarders). There is a new storage area that has been created and there is a progressive replacement scheme in progress for LED lighting. There have also been updates and redecoration in a number of other spaces: shower and bathroom spaces, several bedrooms (including sensory adaptations) and there have been improvements to accessibility for any boarders with physical limitations.

On the first floor the work is slightly less completed in that the corridor border colour has yet to be applied, but the same process is underway in terms of attractive colour scheme and hard-wearing materials. There are to be updates to bedrooms here as well. In the kitchen area on the first floor the temporary breakfast bar has been replaced with a permanent solution that the boarders explained is an addition that they appreciate.

The adaptations have all been made with the support of the habitation team at the school to ensure that boarders' needs are met with the changes, and so far the boarders have really enjoyed the changes that have been made. There is an Autumn theme in the communal areas and entrance hall, and all doors are being changed over to be fob released rather than button released for added security. The updated decorations have been completed to a high standard and have added great quality to the already great standard of accommodation. The spending is both well considered and designed to save money on maintenance over time.

### **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.**

The Leaders of the Residential Setup and I discussed a range of areas during this visit that demonstrate the high quality work that takes place at Linden Lodge.

#### **BBC Report related to Health Screening**

During the morning of the day that my afternoon visit took place, a film crew from BBC News had been on site filming related to a government initiative. The Co-Headteacher explained that the school had been involved in a pilot recently that was intended to support health screening for sensory conditions that take place within Residential Special Schools. The crew had been on site all morning and two members of staff (the Co-Headteacher for Residential, and a member of the teaching staff), had been interviewed along with two students.

The report was subsequently aired on the Saturday following the visit and I saw this as it was aired. The intention was explained as being to support enhanced health screening for pupils in schools that often leads to lost learning time, and the support of known adults doing these tests was explained by the pupils themselves as being a way

of enabling health checks whilst limiting anxiety about medical appointments. The intention of the scheme is to reach 1800 students across the country and the school's involvement is a very positive thing that showcases the willingness of staff to support students in so many ways.

### **Updates and documents shared by the Head of Residential and Deputy Residential Childcare Manager**

- **Scouting Anniversary**

During this visit the leaders of the Residential setup shared the fact that later in the school year there is to be a commemoration of a long standing supporter of the school that brings Scouting to Linden Lodge. This is a very worthwhile event that I will do my best to support.

- **Summer Scheme**

The Head of Residential outlined the success of the annual Summer Scheme at Linden Lodge, which took place in the summer holidays. The event goes from strength to strength and has seen improvements made to processes this year. These included the fact that adapted seating arrangements have improved the overall experience, there has been a new themed approach that has seen daily main briefings take place that have supported the learning of lessons between days, there has been the addition of staff breakfast that has helped enthuse and engage everyone involved and has seen evaluations from pupils lead to changes. One of these was to stop trips out and bring activities on site. The grounds are a delight and as such, this saw a lot of travel time saved as well. Overall the event has been a great success and seen a new high of 50 students involved.

- **10 steps to Richley**

Following the visit, the Head of Residential shared a document that illustrates the stages that each application for residential support goes through. This is a very effective and simple way to show the journey from annual review based request through to attendance at the residential setup. This has the main effect of making all readers aware of the process and depth that the staff support goes into.

In addition, there is a supplementary page that demonstrates in detail the key impacts intended from the residential experience: These are cited as being multicultural experiences, thriving academically, developing life skills, well-rounded immersive learning, wellbeing and supportive networking. I recommend that all parties that may seek to access boarding should read this early in the process of consideration for attending residential.

- **New Supervision document**

The Deputy Residential Childcare manager shared a new supervision template that has begun to be used with the staff during this visit. The layout is also a very simple one. It requests staff reflect upon agreed actions in previous supervision sessions, asks staff to consider achievements, challenges and values that are endemic in the operations of the residential setup, and guides staff to really think about the impact of supervision upon their practice and personal development. The document is a well thought through process and initial feedback has been very positive from staff, and I will be looking to capture feedback in my next visit.

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

In this visit I spent time with boarders and staff on both floors in the Residential space. I was greeted warmly by all that I met and observed and chatted to boarders and staff about recent events and some that are planned. One notable adaptation that was clear was the way tables are configured in the main dining/communal spaces into a horseshoe shape that faces the kitchen area. This has been implemented as a means to developing greater levels of social interaction between boarders and it was explained that it has had a positive impact – especially on the ground floor.

One of the staff then explained plans for a 'Ready Steady Cook' activity with great enthusiasm. This is set to take place over the coming weeks and is an activity that the boarders are being encouraged to take part in. There is also a 'dine in the dark' activity planned for staff and boarders to take part in. The staff reflected upon how this is intended to be an immersive learning experience for staff as well as students.

Following the events above I visited the swimming pool where I noted 5 boarders enjoying an extended session that the boarders have access to once a week (in addition to lessons in school time). This was a really lovely part of the visit in which all of the boarders that I have met before were able to show how much they enjoyed the time in the water and got so much from it. The evening was set to continue with game playing, relaxation, scouts and several borders set to cook for themselves. The visit was a showcase of the range of activities available to the boarders and demonstrated how much they get from the residential experience.

**Parent Consultation of two recently started boarders**

During the period following this visit I contacted the parents of two recently started boarders, and I was able to speak to one. The parent in question explained that his son has been attending Linden Lodge for over a decade and has now reached the age of 17. In preparation for onward movement to college the family felt that boarding would be a good first step. The nature of the support needed means that colleges that are appropriate are a significant distance away from the family address, and would therefore require a boarding place and undertaking this at Linden Lodge is seen as a sensible first step.

The particular parent I spoke to did express the fact that there had been a degree of reluctance on his part to see boarding put in place, but reflected (after some 3 months or so have elapsed) that it has been a positive experience so far. There have been no reported issues and the family are pleased that access to swimming and walking after has been facilitated. The parent explained that the initial phase of boarding had seen them visit and support setting up their son's room, but there had been no call to attend or any contact made for anything of concern. Regular contact is being maintained through the contact book, and there is no concern for them related to anything of significance. The parent did explain that he is going to make contact over medication delivery near to the evening, and to chat about bed time routines soon. He is also going to ask if there could be a possibility of photos of events being shared. There is also a panel hearing related to the hours being funded at the residential setup that has been supported by the Residential Team which has pleased the family. I agreed to feed back these elements in this report and stated I would look to follow these up in my next visit.

**Thematic Areas**

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

**Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision**

I was pleased to catch up with the team at Linden Lodge in this visit, and noted the updates to the buildings as a very useful component in adding to the experience of the boarders. The time spent with the staff, boarders and chatting with the parent that I spoke to confirmed the high standards in place. It was also lovely to view the new report on the TV in the days after the visit. The staff and boarders came across as committed and passionate as I have come to expect as the default position in my time visiting.

I would like to thank everyone at Linden Lodge for their ongoing warm welcome during my visits and I am looking forward to supporting developments through this year once again.

**Name: Mark Goode**

**Date: 14/10/2024**

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT		
Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<p><b><u>Staff Consultation Next Visit</u></b> For the recently appointed Team Leader and I to meet in the next visit that I undertake in term 2 to chat through the process of promotion, supervision and general aspects of working in the new role.</p> <p><b><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The effectiveness of leaders and managers</u></b> Leaders and managers create a culture of aspiration and positivity. They have high expectations of their staff to change and improve the lives of the children they are responsible for</p>	<p>Mark will have the opportunity to meet with newly appointed Team Leader.</p> <p>Mark will be shown our recent staff survey.</p> <p>Update on staff achievement obtaining care / management qualification.</p>	
<p><b><u>Brain injury trainer consultation</u></b> For the Head of Residential to support my undertaking a consultation with the Inset trainer in my next visit, and to retain any training materials for me to review.</p> <p><b><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The overall experiences and progress of children</u></b> Research-informed practice, some of which may be innovative, continues to develop from a strong and confident base, making an exceptional difference to children's experiences and progress.</p>	<p>Mark will be updated on INSET training received by the Brain injury trainer.</p>	
<p><b><u>Family Support and Liaison</u></b> For the Head of Residential to ensure that an update on the ongoing support for the recent leaver that has no place as yet is available in my next visit, and to consider the feedback from the parent that I spoke to as detailed in the consultations section of this report.</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>Mark will be provided with an update reading our recent leaver.</p> <p>Mark will also be updated on photos being shared with family and routines.</p> <p>Mark will be shown the work and support the Therapist's, Music Therapist and Habilitation Specialist provide to the staff and young people. How we work on independence for all our young people.</p>	



### Head of Residential's Comments

It was nice meeting Mark on his latest visit. Mark, has managed to capture how we support the young people whilst also showing how residential is constantly evolving and adapting to meeting young people's needs. He saw the building work, that was undertaken and the improvements.

We are very proud of our young people's achievements and constantly strive to build strong working relationships with families.

**Name: Danny Sinclair**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

### Head Teachers' Comments

It is always a pleasure to share our successes, improvements and any learning points with Mark on his visits. It is also a great opportunity for us to reflect and consider all of the improvements but also the ongoing fantastic relationships that exist between staff , young people and families.

**Name: Sarah Norris**

**Date: 17, October 2024**

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

**Name:** Kieran Travers, Co-Chair of Governors

**Date:** 19/11/2024

It is helpful to read the Independent Visitors (IV) reports and it adds to Governors' confidence that residents are safe and well cared for at Richley House.

It is helpful to understand the work on the refurbishment of Richley House is on track. Governors visited Richley House recently and we could see for ourselves the improvement to the internal areas of the building.

The IV's report of the warm welcome he gets on visits supports the evidence of well cared for residents who seem to understand the role of the IV. That knowledge will add to their feelings of wellbeing and safety.

The consultation with a parent of a child who has recently moved to Richley House is helpful and positive in respect of the process to support families where children are moving to become a boarder.

Governors appreciate the opportunity to use the IV's reported observations as a mechanism for future discussions with senior leaders.