



## Standard 3 Visit

<b>Name of Service</b>	<b>Linden Lodge School</b>
<b>Date of previous visit</b>	<b>09/12/2024</b>
<b>Date of this visit</b>	<b>10/02/2025</b>
<b>Standard 3 Visitor</b>	<b>Mark Goode</b>
<b>Time of visit</b>	<b>14.30 – 17.30</b>
<b>Visit Supported by</b>	<b>Sarah Norris – Co-Headteacher responsible for Residential</b> <b>Danny Sinclair – Head of Residential</b> <b>Vicky Watson – Deputy Residential Childcare Manager</b>

### 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 on a Monday afternoon in the final week 3<sup>rd</sup> half term of the year and was greeted by the Co-Head for Residential, as well as the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager and the Head of Residential. The immediate focus of the visit was the current context, and the leaders informed me that there had been an OFSTED Inspection of the residential service the previous week, and that it had been a very successful outcome. The Leaders were pleased with the response of the Inspectors to all aspects of the work undertaken. More is discussed lower in the report that amplifies this. I was informed that there have been no departures from the boarding cohort, and that there are 3 boarders due to start attending in the coming weeks. The details related to these are covered in the consultations section below, and I spoke to a parent of a new boarder in the days after my visit.

This visit saw me once again tour the Residential provision and the leaders pointed out a range of aspects before I undertook the mandatory checks that are required in a Standard 3 visit alongside the Senior Staff as usual. I also spent time with boarders and staff in the dining room spaces as dinner was eaten and I observed the social aspects of this as the boarders and staff settled into their evening.

### Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and Verification by Independent Visitor
<p><b><u>Health and Safety Checks: Specifically, Fire Safety Records</u></b></p> <p>For the Site Manager to be available in my next visit and for fire safety records to be made available for a discussion and check.</p>	<p><b><u>Response between visits</u></b></p> <p>The Premises Manager had been informed and was due to be available in the next visit.</p> <p><b><u>Verification in this visit</u></b></p> <p>During this visit the Premises Manager was not on site. This has therefore been deferred to the date of the next visit.</p>
<p><b><u>Habilitation Team Support work</u></b></p> <p>For the Head of Residential Care to organise work related to the impact of the Habilitation team, and for a consultation in my next visit to support this.</p>	<p><b><u>Response between visits</u></b></p> <p>Mark will be shown how Habilitation, work and support the young people and staff. Mark will be shown and Case study of impact, and benefits of boarding for young people with most complex needs.</p> <p><b><u>Verification in this visit</u></b></p> <p>In the consultations section there is a review of a case study related to the work of the Habilitation team.</p>
<p><b><u>Staff Inset Review</u></b></p> <p>For details of planned Brain Injury Inset to be shared with me in my next visit.</p>	<p><b><u>Response between visits</u></b></p> <p>Mark will be given an update on the training, staff will receive in January 2025.</p> <p><b><u>Verification in this visit</u></b></p> <p>The detail of this was shared with me in this visit. There is a review in the consultations section below.</p>

## How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.

The Head of Residential informed me that there have been no issues of concern internally or requiring the support of external agencies related to the boarding cohort since my last visit in term 2. The high level of vigilance applied to all aspects of planning and support at Linden Lodge mean that the staff are always aware of any issues and will openly discuss and challenge any issues. 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	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 2.  Attendance figures since my last visit in term 6 have averaged at 93.2% for boarders, with a corresponding figure for day pupils of 83.5%. These attendance figures remain more positive for boarders, indicating that boarding helps to increase attendance.
<b>Complaints</b> 19.1, 19.2, 19.3	The Head of Residential informed me that there have been no complaints since the date of my last visit in term 2. The feedback that I have gathered as part of this visit verifies the high esteem that the residential service is held in, and the overall outcome of the OFSTED Inspection verifies the viewpoint that I hold: specifically that the hard work that staff commit to building high quality care and support means that complaints are very unlikely.
<b>Sanctions</b> 20.6	I was once again informed that there have been no sanctions applied since my last visit in term 2. The time I spent in the boarding space alongside staff and boarders illustrated the way support is offered and communal experiences are managed in a way that boarders appreciate and feel valued in. My view remains that this prevents the circumstances where sanctions may be needed.
<b>Restraint (including restrictive interventions)</b> 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7	I was once again informed that there have been no incidents since my last visit in term 2 that have required any restraint or restrictive intervention. I consider the likelihood of this taking place to remain extremely low based on this visit and the high level of interaction and mutual respect that exists between staff and residents, as well as between residents.
<b>Risk Assessments</b> Appendix B (11,16)	During this visit I followed up the triangulated consultation that I had undertaken in my last visit between key leaders related to care planning and risk assessment processes. This saw me reflecting upon feedback that had been given during the recent OFSTED Inspection. The feedback from the OFSTED Inspection visit was that they were impressed with the detail and the fact that checks are undertaken every ½ term, accompanied by all staff reading and signing plans. The process sees the Head of Residential and the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager populate plans through use of a detailed pre-admission questionnaire that gathers information regarding family, medication, routines, night support, diet, phobias, favourite things, things to avoid target skills and anything else deemed relevant by the family. They are comprehensive but simple and in this there is a great power that is, in part, down to the asking of open questions to elicit detail, and then used. The plans are therefore bespoke and personalised. This process is to see 4 new boarders join in the coming weeks and there is a fast turnaround owing to the embedded nature of the system.
<b>Placement Plans</b> 7.2	

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

During this Standard 3 visit I undertook a full tour of the Residential Provision at Richley House again, and the completed redecoration that I commented upon in the report after my last visit is being well maintained and has been added to with an ongoing set of works that the OFSTED Inspector commented upon positively. This is pleasing as it had been a feature of the provision that was the subject of suggested enhancements in a former visit.

A notable development in this visit was the development of an extra bedroom with an en-suite shower room for a boarder that is building towards transition out of residential. This is relevant to the boarder as a first step in the process and points to the pro-active way transitions are managed at Linden Lodge. The space had been an office, but has been repurposed very sensibly. This showcases the fact that the staff at Linden Lodge are always looking to add to the resources and care on offer.

### **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.**

At the start of this visit I spoke for a period of time with the 3 key leaders of the Residential Service, and it was clear that the recent OFSTED Inspection has seen last year's outcome of Outstanding in all areas followed by a very positive Inspection this time as well. The Co-Headteacher commented that the feedback received has been a morale boosting judgement for the entire staff team. Comment was made that the Inspector was pleased with a wide range of aspects and praised the school for the ongoing efforts related to buildings and maintenance (this had seen an area for improvement previously cited). Features such as the breakfast bars, redecorated corridors and technology used to support boarders all came in for commendation. In addition to this, the parental meal visits that are undertaken were praised, and the Inspector stated that parental praise for transition work and developing lifelong skills was a key area that was of high quality, as well as all positive elements joining well with boarders' feedback.

It was clear that the showcasing of evidence that was required in the Inspection – especially related to the impact of all aspects of the support given to boarders and families – was very much a key part of maintaining the positive view held by the Inspectors, but overall the leaders reported that the staff team presented an aura of calm. There was a definite shift in this Inspection and this saw the staff seizing the opportunity to show what happens at Linden Lodge and how. This saw the fact that there is no complacency, there is attention to detail and an overall ability to shine came through.

The Inspection team fed back their admiration for the work that is undertaken at Linden Lodge in all regards and that the evidence to back up the work is a strong feature as well.

Moving forwards from the Inspection, the Leaders and I discussed a range of other areas that are current features of the work of the staff team in this visit as detailed below:

#### **Review of shared document related to the work of the Habilitation Team**

The Head of Residential shared a case study review of work undertaken to support a boarder as part of this visit. It explains very clearly the process of habilitation support in place for a 15 year old boarder that has had no functional vision since birth, and has just begun boarding once a week.

The case study explains the core aim of habilitation support through both short and longer term goals. The key aspects of familiarisation of key routes and areas that have been gradually navigated at a pace that supports the

boarder. The case study makes it very clear that a central part of this is building towards movement in her environment without auditory support or distractions.

There is a very clear exposition of the longer term vision for the boarder with foci of maximising safety, independence and confidence – beginning in Residential with different outward and return routes, as well as familiarity with preparation of snacks and meals. This is clearly an initial step in lifelong skills development and points to the importance of all aspects of the work undertaken across the scope of the staff at Linden Lodge for the learners involved. It is a simple, yet very powerful document that explains the importance of the work undertaken.

### **Review of the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025 Newsletter**

The Head of Residential also shared the most recent newsletter for the school as part of this visit. It is a showcase for all aspects of life at Linden Lodge and covers a wide spectrum of awards for work in the school generally, as well as highlighted events and features. The February edition has a great deal of focus upon the Residential Service with an explanation of the professional fashion that the inspection was navigated by staff. It is clear that the wider Linden Lodge community is fully invested in the ongoing work therein.

The newsletter also contains a large colour feature devoted to a recent collaboration between the Residential Team and the operators of the After School Club through the 'Ready Steady Cook' competition. This saw teams of boarders working together on an independent cooking competition. The winners were decided by a vote after tasting the finished dishes, and the newsletter contains a selection of vibrant photos that illustrate the fabulous success of this event. It truly captures the energy and enthusiasm of the boarders/contestants, as well as the passion for such events that emanates from the staff. This piece of evidence is a powerful way to demonstrate the extent to which staying in the Residential setup at Linden Lodge adds valuable life skills and experiences to the boarders in ways that truly enrich.

### **Recent Staff Training related to Brain Injury Awareness**

In the recommendations that I shared as part of my term 2 Standard 3 visit I explained that the staff at Linden Lodge were set to attend a training event from the Child Brain Injury trust. This visit saw the Head of Residential share a PowerPoint that detailed the composition of the event with me. 15 staff attended across the range of Education, Residential and Therapy Staff. The leaders fed back that the training had had a very positive impact on the staff and is clearly connected to one boarder in Residential in particular. The staff felt that the training was bespoke and of a very high standard.

In reviewing the materials, I concur that the range covered is most useful. It covers types of acquired brain injuries, 'hidden disability' common areas of difficulty with ABI, a distinct focus on teenagers with ABI and links to useful resources. As a training tool, this is a very important area for coverage at Linden Lodge and adds to the already well informed and highly trained staff team.

### **Residential Meeting that took place in my visit**

During this visit I sat in on a house meeting that was taking place as the end of term was approaching. This detailed weekly plans (as the meeting was on a Monday afternoon), and saw all boarders' involvement. The coming trips that are planned were discussed, as well as plans for the Valentine's ball in the middle of the week.

1.2 term plans for all boarders and staff were also discussed and each boarder and staff member shared openly. It was interesting to note the way a boarder began expressing quite negatively about some of the details in the meeting, but through support from the staff and other boarders this was changed around to positive

engagement when visits of relatives came up. The boarder changed their mind and began planning menus for the family visit which then led on to plans for activity to prepare this in the coming days.

Overall, this was a very positive and inclusive meeting that saw the boarding community sharing time and communally planning the next week together.

#### **Time spent with Boarders and Staff during the visit**

Following on from the meeting above, I moved through to the two lounge areas in sequence and shared time with staff and the boarders as they enjoyed dinner together. The main meal enjoyed was a lamb curry with couscous that each boarder was supported to eat independently of staff where possible and they all seemed to very much enjoy the meal itself. Where needed the boarders had access to plate surrounds that met their sensory needs well but did not impinge on their ability to do this as independently as possible. Whilst dinner was being eaten, the boarders and staff were engaged in conversation about a range of topics including supporting each other in navigating the furniture and the fact that one boarder is creating a large scale version of a sensory game in his room with staff support. One boarder also shared the fact that they are currently spending time in the day in a class of much younger pupils as a learning support. This was an area that the boarder expressed very enthusiastically about.

One of the boarders was assisted in cooking their own separate meal in the form of a lasagne, and the discussion then moved on to consider the evening activities that lay ahead. The plan was to see biscuits being baked and the creation of overnight oats for the next morning's breakfast. The dinner period was a communal time with all boarders engaged in social interaction. The layout of the tables certainly helps to support this, but the staff prompts and general willingness of the boarders to engage was very pleasing to see as well. It was also noted that the boarders have very healthy appetites!

#### **Consultation with new training provider**

During this visit I was informed that there was a visit taking place of a new training provider. They were in school to meet with two key residential staff related to the Level 5 residential Courses that both are undertaking. Once they had met with the staff, the providers' staff also spent time talking with myself and the Head of Residential.

It was explained that the recent change of provider had come about as the staff are keen on live face-to-face sessions and a bespoke approach to the learning being supported. Not all providers that were considered were willing or able to provide this. The willingness of the provider to meet the requirements of the provider was praised by the staff and future opportunities were discussed. I agreed to look to connect this training provider with other schools that I work with – especially with those in the Greater London Area that could be looking to expand staffing. There is a growing positive relationship between the school and the provider that seems set to have a strong impact.

#### **Parental Consultation undertaken in the days after this visit**

In the days following the visit, I spoke to a parent of a long term student at Linden Lodge (6 years in attendance), that is approaching a period where leaving Linden Lodge is coming. There is a process of getting ready for college taking place and considering transition is a current focus. The parent explained that preparing for the inevitable next step is an important reason for attending boarding, and that knowing the staff is useful in this regard. The boarder has stayed before and this is helpful also.

The next steps of connecting the next provider to the school and the residential staff are considered an important phase, and boarding is set to see this take place. I offered to be available if wanted to liaise later in the process, and the parent expressed no concerns about the coming Residential experience at all owing to previous positive experiences.

**Other discussion points with the leaders covered the following areas:**

- The Independent Person that visits was commented upon by OFSTED in terms of the coverage of aspects of the work at Linden Lodge – this was quoted as being based upon solid and tangible evidence.
- Minerva House has been working alongside OTIS lifts and creating an app entitled 'Made to Move'. This is seeing Linden Lodge competing in a global competition that will take place in March.
- A recent high profile event took place at Linden Lodge for the 50<sup>th</sup> year celebration related to Scouting at Linden Lodge. This involved video calls and other forms of support.
- I was informed of work that has been taking place between waking night staff, extra support and social care following additional funding being secured for a boarder that has required it owing to medical needs. This has greatly enhanced provision.
- Upcoming trips to both AFC Wimbledon and Chelsea FC were detailed as well.

**Thematic Areas**

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

**Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision**

I am delighted for the staff at Linden Lodge that the recent OFSTED Inspection has been such an affirming experience for all. In my view this has not happened by chance and is the result of a humble and hardworking team that have pulled together over a prolonged period to see the experiences of all boarders remain of a high quality. The fact that the Head of Residential and I discussed plans to see this Inspection built upon immediately is testament to the lack of complacency on show and is a key reason for the high standards that OFSTED have confirmed.

I would like to thank everyone at Linden Lodge for their ongoing warm welcome during all of my visits. It is very pleasing to me that hard work and resolve is being recognised and I look forward to supporting the team in the next phase of the Residential journey.

**Name: Mark Goode****Date: 19.02.2025****RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT**

Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<p><b><u>Leaders' ongoing actions</u></b> For the Leadership Team to use the recent Inspection as a launchpad for ongoing standards' evaluation and continue to develop the boarding experience via a further SCCIF review and enhancement.</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>SCCIF will be reviewed and enhanced.</p> <p>Areas will be identified in the SCCIF.</p>	Term 4 2025



#### 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 meeting. Thank you your highlighting we are continuing to build on what we provide to the young people and families.

**Name: Danny Sinclair**

**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

#### Head Teacher's Comments

It is a pleasure to read that all of the work that the residential team bring to Richley House is recognised during these unannounced visits. We are driven by the fantastic progress that our residential students make and continue to strive to improve the environment, opportunities and outcomes for our boarders.

**Name: Sarah Norris**

**Date: 04/03/2025**

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

It is helpful to read a very positive report and to read evidence that supports the view of a very well run, safe and considerate service.

It is testament to skill and commitment of the School and Residential leadership team to read positive reports about staff expertise, parental confidence in the service provided as well as positive reports from residents.

Governors will ensure that fire safety checks that were to be verified by the IV are in place.

**Name: Winnie Williams and Kieran Travers**

**Date: 10/03/2025**