



Standard 3 Visit

Name of Service	Linden Lodge School
Date of previous visit	10/02/2025
Date of this visit	20/03/2025
Standard 3 Visitor	Mark Goode
Time of visit	14.30 – 17.30
Visit Supported by	Sarah Norris – Co-Headteacher responsible for Residential Danny Sinclair – Head of 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 (last updated 5th September 2022, and reviewed as of 4th 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 Thursday afternoon, 2 weeks before the Easter break. and was greeted by the Co-Head for Residential and the Head of Residential. The immediate focus of the visit was the current context, and the leaders updated me on the fact that the report from the recent OFSTED Inspection of the residential service has now been published and shared with the wider school community once again. The whole school are naturally very pleased that their ongoing work to ensure high standards have been recognised and I asked how this is being built upon. The consultations section contains details of my discussions with the leaders. I was informed that there have been no departures from the boarding cohort, and that there are several more new boarders due to start attending in the coming weeks. I undertook all aspects of 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, observed some cooking by one of the boarders, and caught up with most over recent events. In the days following the visit I spoke to a parent of a boarder that has undergone some changes to their boarding arrangements recently, and I undertook a check in with the site manager related to Fire Procedures as suggested in my last visit.

Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and Verification by Independent Visitor
<p><u>Leaders' ongoing actions</u> 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><u>Update following the previous visit:</u> The SCCIF was set for review.</p> <p><u>Verification in this visit</u> During this visit the subject of how the recent OFSTED Inspection, and retaining the judgements of Outstanding in all areas, was discussed. The consultations section below contains details of how this is being built upon, and a review of the SCCIF will be taking place by the time of my next visit to reflect these elements.</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 3. We discussed the recent events for boarders and the highest of standards are in evidence related to the care given. Steff really know the pupils well, and the mutual respect that is shown is endemic in the work undertaken.

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 anything untoward. I therefore remain of the opinion that high standards are applied related to safeguarding practices at Linden Lodge. I completely endorse the view expressed in the report from the recent OFSTED Inspection "Leaders, managers and staff have a sound understanding of children's vulnerabilities and risks. They work well with a team of therapists to understand behaviour. This understanding, alongside their strong relationships with children, enables them to provide effective, individualised care in response to any safeguarding issues raised".

Mandatory Areas	
Topic	Comments
Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes 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 3. Attendance figures since my last visit in term 6 have averaged at 91.9% for boarders, with a corresponding figure for day pupils of 89.0%. These attendance figures remain more positive for boarders, indicating that boarding helps to increase attendance.
Complaints 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 3. 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. The parental feedback that I received as part of this visit entirely joins up with this viewpoint as well.
Health and Safety Checks: Specifically, Fire Safety in this visit	<p>During this visit, I scrutinised the regular checks that are made of all areas in the Residential building. This generally takes place on a Friday afternoon to mean that boarding operations are not disturbed. These checks were fully completed.</p> <p>I also reviewed other paperwork related to supplementary visits by external contractors that attend whenever any faults are noted across the school site. These are carried out as soon as is practicable after faults are reported – usually the same day, and always by the next day.</p> <p>Finally, I scrutinised the general Fire Risk Assessment and can confirm it is up to date, although it is due for an annual update before my next visit takes place in term 5, when I have stated that I will check the updated version has been completed.</p>
Sanctions 20.6	I was once again informed that there have been no sanctions applied since my last visit in term 3. The time I spent in the boarding space alongside staff and boarders illustrated that the support provided is built around the needs of each boarder. My view remains that this prevents the circumstances where sanctions may be needed.
Restraint (including restrictive interventions) 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 3 that have required any restraint or restrictive intervention. I continue to be of the view that there is very little likelihood of such events taking place based upon the interactions I observed in this visit.
Risk Assessments Appendix B (11,16)	During this visit I discussed the review processes for the oversight and reviews of all care plans and risk assessments. The Head of Residential explained that he and the Deputy Residential Childcare Manager have recently reviewed all updated plans and risk assessments. Plans remain comprehensive and simple.
Placement Plans 7.2	Plans for the boarders whose arrival is imminent in the coming weeks are in the process of being created, and I agreed to review these in the next visit that I undertake in term 5, as well as speaking to parents of new boarders to capture their views on processes as well in a thematic review.

Suitability of the building, furnishings & external environment.

During this Standard 3 visit I undertook a full tour of the Residential Provision at Richley House once again and noted the fact that the maintenance of all areas remains of a very high standard.

A notable development in this visit was the development of an eco-garden project in the terrace area that is located on the 1st floor of the residential building. The work to set this up is underway and sees a number of planters ready for filling. The aim is to grow vegetables that can then be used in independence work (cooking etc) in the residential setup.

It was also explained that one of the boarders is being supported to create a large scale version of the 'Bop It' game that he enjoys in a communal part of the residential building. I then undertook a review of Fire Safety recording processes with the Site Manager – the details of this are contained in the mandatory section above. The detail within the filing that I scrutinised was comprehensive and up to date.

Finally, the Head of Residential explained that an internal large scale relaxation swing that has been being used in a different part of the school is being repurposed into the lounge space for the boarders' use. It is hoped that this will be in place by the time of my next visit in term 5.

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 and Head of Residential

At the start of this visit I spoke for a period of time with the 2 most Senior 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 sustaining of this grading. This report has now been published and we reflected upon how to sustain momentum and avoid complacency (as is the Linden Lodge way in my experience). This, among other areas is reflected upon here:

Retaining Outstanding in all areas, and maintaining a focus that continues to innovate and refresh quality

The Leaders explained that the CEO and Governors are all very pleased with the outcome of the recent inspection, and it was clear that the reflections after the feedback was received have concluded that staff all have a shared view of the expectations of care. The staff all responded, in an unscripted fashion, with a unified sense of what is expected. This is not achieved without hard work and consistent systems that are applied by all staff over a prolonged period – a fact that was not lost on the inspection team who commented that "Leaders champion a culture of learning and open communication between the teams. Staff say that they find the feedback beneficial and strive for continuous improvement. As a result, Leaders have an exceptionally well rounded view of the experiences of children and the impact that the care they receive is having on their outcomes."

Next Steps for Residential, to build upon the recent Inspection outcome

The Leaders explained that there are several initiatives that have been started, or are in development that, in my view, demonstrate very clearly that the service continues to look forward and is very focussed on maintaining standards, and creating new innovations to support the boarders:

- Recent and planned trips to local Professional Football Clubs (AFC Wimbledon, Crystal Palace, Chelsea)
- An Independent Living Skills Matrix is currently being baselined for all boarders as a framework to showcase skills' development.

- A Residential experience is being planned for July that will see a number of boarders (alongside day students) visiting Farnham. There is a plan to see the boarders that stay at school have the same content in terms of activities that are on offer in the trip itself.
- The school is scheduled to offer activities and a programme of experiences across the Summer break as it did last year. This is a very positive feature of the plans and supports boarders and families well.

The Leaders are keen to ensure that the operations of residential are continually evolving. Examples shared in this visit were:

- Making sure that operations are continually streamlined,
- Seeing that more opportunities are offered to boarders all the time,
- Making sure that close attention is paid to the changing nature of boarders as time passes. Their experiences and circumstances require constant vigilance over details,
- Creating contacts and collaborations with a number of other providers that share common needs (or similar). These were explained in detail to me in the visit, and I applaud the range being considered. I have agreed to support connections with at least one other provider as well after this visit by sharing contact details,
- Considering setting up joint residential trips with other providers in the future,
- Continuing to invest in the value of all boarders accessing the wider community as much as possible. The boarding provision is outward looking in the name of broadening experiences for all boarders.

The Head of Residential also stated that the SCCIF evaluation will be updated with all new ventures and in the light of the recent OFSTED Inspection outcome. I agreed to review this when I next visit.

Review of recent celebration video

The Head of Residential shared a recently created video that has been shown to all staff across the school. This contains contributions from staff and a large number of boarders that explain the rationale for residential, the experiences that boarders are given, and their own personal reflections.

This was shared at a full staff briefing that then led to the sharing of the news of the recent Outstanding inspection outcome. It is filled with fabulous detail over the high quality work that takes place, and shows key events such as the 'Ready Steady Cook' event, the Valentine's Disco and the dressing up that took place on World Book Day.

This is a wonderful exposition of the work that takes place in boarding at Linden Lodge, and it is no surprise to me that the Inspection team have written a report that is so full of praise for the tremendous impact that is obvious whenever I attend here.

Time spent with Boarders and Staff during the visit

During this visit I moved through all three floors that are used by the Residential Service and spent time with a number of the boarders. They were all fully occupied with activities of their choosing and were being ably supported by staff. The range included 'Bop It' being played by one boarder, another engaging in cookery and slicing onions, preparing chicken and rice to make a curry. A third was noted in several different areas, both in the grounds and in the house, being supported by a staff member in exploring the grounds and navigating the environment themselves.

One boarder reflected upon a presentation that had been delivered in the morning of the day I visited related to an international competition to produce an app that is supported by OTIS lifts. The presentation event saw 6

students presenting to a panel of independent judges and is targeted at visual and hearing impaired students in a number of provisions. The boarder reflected that she felt it had been a pretty good presentation and that the judges thanked them all for their efforts; stating that they had done a wonderful job. It was clear from the animated reflection that the boarders are all hopeful of getting through to the next round and competing with American students. The opportunity to take part in such an event is a further example of the 'no-limits' approach that is taken at Linden Lodge and was extremely inspirational to hear about.

The visit was concluded when one of the staff that supports the boarders explained that they were about to start creating a 'Red Nose' cake and this was eagerly anticipated.

Parental Consultation undertaken in the days after this visit

In the days following the visit, I spoke to a parent of a relatively long term boarder and student at Linden Lodge that has recently seen a change in their status. The diagnosis of a change in their medical status meant that they needed additional support from a dedicated ~~nurse~~ Health Care Assistant that required additional funding to be approved at Local Authority level. This took longer than anticipated to see achieved, and whilst this was being sourced the full time boarding status was not possible for a period of time.

The parent that I spoke to reported that the staff at the school have been extremely supportive in this period and have expedited the funding being secured through the intervention of key leaders of Residential. This has had a dramatic impact and has seen full time boarding resumed much faster than it would have been. There has been a staggered reintegration undertaken and the boarder is now back in full time boarding.

The parent also fed back that the family are very happy with the ongoing support that is in place and are looking forward to a long working partnership with the school. The key areas that were commented upon as being important have been the independence skills work, the inclusion in general and the social development that being a part of the Linden Lodge community has supported. The parent could not be happier with the support and raised no concerns at all.

Thematic Areas

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

Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision

Now that the OFSTED Inspection report has been published, I am really pleased to be able to offer my congratulations to the entire team at Linden Lodge on the fabulous achievement of retaining the Outstanding judgment in all areas of the work of the residential provision. There are no defined recommendations in the report, and yet the leaders made it very clear that they continue to innovate and aim beyond their current high expectations for their young people.

This attitude does the entire organisation enormous credit, and is a key reason for the high standards that have been recognised in the recent inspection. That having been said, the leaders are fully focussed upon making all areas of care and support as inclusive and developmental as possible for the benefit of all students (and their families), and their resolve to do so is not in any way about wishing for external recognition. They are entirely focussed on making the residential experience as full as it can be. As a result, care and learning is of the highest standard and I am so pleased that this has led to such affirmation.

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 the hard work of all, the clear leadership from the Co-Head of School, and the calm, assured presence of the Head of Residential and Deputy has led a great team of staff to this achievement. I am delighted to be involved and I look forward to supporting the team into the next phase of the Residential journey.

Name: Mark Goode

Date: 24.03.25

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT

Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<p><u>SCCIF Review Post Ofsted Inspection</u> It was suggested that it would be prudent to review the SCCIF audit now that the most recent Inspection report has been published to make sure that the details are reflected in the audit. More than this however, I advocate making sure that all new and additional elements that are in place that enrich the experience of boarders are captured in the SCCIF reflection tool.</p> <p><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The effectiveness of leaders and managers</u> 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>	<p>Term 5 2025</p> <p>Term 5 2025</p>

Head of Residential's Comments

Thank you Mark for your visit. A nice report to read, you managed to capture the work we do with our young people. Whilst also showing how residential is constantly evolving and adapting to meet the young people's needs. Seeing how the staff engage with the young people and understanding their individual requirements. We are very proud of our young people's achievements and constantly strive to build strong working relationships with families. You referenced our work regarding supporting one of our families, to get their young person back to boarding after their recent health changes.

Name: Danny Sinclair

Date: 1st April 2025

Head Teacher's Comments

It is a continued delight to welcome Mark to our residential provision and showcase our outward facing approach. With this focus and our attention to detail we look to continue to build on our successes not for the recognition but for the benefit of children and young people and their families. Richey House is a vibrant and dynamic provision that is an incredible privilege to be responsible for.

Name: Sarah Norris

Date: 29th April 2025

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

This is a positive report with detailed evidence of the good quality care and education provided to children at Richley House.

It is helpful to read the evidence found by the Independent Visitor (IV) that supports the conclusions of the recent OfSTED inspection. It is also helpful to read of the actions set out to ensure the standards of care and education remain outstanding.

Alongside the IV, the Governors are keen to acknowledge the hard work and commitment by the leadership team and the staff who ensure the care provided to residents is outstanding. We will continue to review these reports and the tracking of plans by the IV as a means to ensure we have clear evidence of continued outstanding care of residents at Richley House.

Name: Kieran Travers, Co-chair Governors Board

Date: 07/05/2025