



Standard 3 Visit

Name of Service	Linden Lodge School
Date of previous visit	02.07.2025
Date of this visit	01.10.2025
Standard 3 Visitor	Mark Goode
Time of visit	14.15 – 17.00
Visit Supported by	Sarah Norris: Co-Headteacher responsible for Residential Danny Sinclair: Head of Residential Vicky Watson: Deputy Residential Childcare Manager

About the Independent Visitor

Visiting the residential provision today is Mark Goode. Mark has worked in the Education sector for the past 25 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 (SCCIF (04/09/25), NMS (05/09/2022)).

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.

I arrived for this visit on a Wednesday afternoon, in the middle of the first half term of the academic year, and was greeted by the Co-Head for Residential, the Head of Residential and the Deputy Residential Childcare

Manager. We began by discussing the current context for the Residential Service as there was a lot to catch up on, and then I undertook the full set of mandatory checks that are required in a Standard 3 visit. There have been a number of departures from the boarding cohort across the summer holiday, and handover support has been in place for all leavers. The oversight and support described is ongoing and of a very comprehensive nature. There have been no new boarders begin attending boarding yet this term, but 1 is hoped to be beginning soon and the staff are in touch with the family over the details. There are a number of other boarders that have increased their boarding time per week, and a range of other learners in school that may be moving across to boarding soon as well. The Co-Head explained that a recent parent induction for day students included a focus and tour of the Residential Service and this can lead to further learners accessing the boarding provision.

During the visit I also spent time with boarders and staff in the dining room spaces in the Residential Block, as well as visiting a Music Session that some of the boarders were attending. The visit saw me spend time reflecting upon induction process with 2 recently appointed staff members, and in the days following the visit I spoke to the parents of a boarder related to the support they receive. These details are all captured in the report below.

Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and Verification by Independent Visitor
<p><u>Recommendation elements carried over from term 6</u> <u>Staff Consultations into term 6</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time with the new staff. 2. List of training to best equip the staff to meet the needs of the young people to be shared. 3. SCCIF and NMS with a RAG rating to identify any areas that require improvement. 	<p><u>Verification in this visit</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This was undertaken in the visit with 2 staff members and the details are included in the consultations section below. 2. This has been reviewed in the days after the visit and is detailed below. 3. During this visit the detail contained in several key documents was scrutinised related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i). An annual review of the National Minimum Standards (as required by Standard 3.4), and this is a very strong evaluative document that illustrates the many strengths of the provision through RAG rating the different standards against available evidence. (ii). A live and constantly evolving SCCIF audit tool that explains (against available evidence) where the areas of current development are felt to be needed, and why. This is also RAG rated. <p>Both documents are extremely well considered and I advocated that the Head of Residential consider drawing out all current focus areas based on the RAG rating and creating a focussed action plan.</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 6 of the last year. We discussed the recent events for boarders and my conviction that the highest of standards are in evidence related to the care given remains as firm as it has ever been. I have no concerns following this visit related to safeguarding at Linden Lodge.

Mandatory Areas	
Topic	Comments
Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes 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. Attendance figures for Boarders since my last visit in term 6 of last year have averaged at 95.6% for boarders, with a corresponding figure for day pupils of 90.8%. Authorised absence is broadly comparable, with boarding figures at 4.34%, and day figures at 4.8%, but there have been no unauthorised absences at all for boarders since my last visit, and day students' figure is 4.3%. These attendance figures remain more positive for boarders, indicating that boarding continues to help attendance. This is an important impact and demonstrates the increased accessibility of education that is brought to bear by attending boarding. This of course, adds to the impact upon social skills, independence, self-care and a wide range of other personalised progress measures that are supported by the 24 hour curriculum.</p>
Complaints 19.1, 19.2, 19.3	<p>The Head of Residential Leaders explained that there have been no complaints since the date of my last visit in term 6 of last year. We discussed the recent new staff appointees ahead of me meeting them in person, and the care taken to recruit and train is a key part of this element of the strength of the service.</p>
Health and Safety Checks: Specifically, Fire Safety in this visit	<p>During this visit, I met with the Head of Premises and reviewed the Fire Risk Assessment Action Plan. The detail shared illustrated that the areas for development from the last visit are all underway and I made some suggestions on ways to RAG rate and add a few details to the plan. The Premises Manager explained that where actions are not imminent, that Fire Marshals have been increased, trained and a drill undertaken that has seen a full debrief undertaken. I have no concerns regarding this process as there is strong oversight in my view.</p>
Sanctions 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 spent in the boarding space alongside staff and boarders affirmed my understanding that a key strength in the work undertaken at Linden Lodge is centred in the strong relationships and trust that exists between staff and boarders. This develops over time and has a real impact. A boarder that was discussed in this visit was shown as having truly bonded with staff over time, and is now engaged in a wide number of support actions to others – with the 'buttons' that I describe later in the report being a stand out feature outside each boarder's room. These connections mean sanctions are rare.</p>
Restraint (including restrictive interventions) 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7	<p>There have been no incidents since my last visit in term 6 of last year that have required restraint or restrictive intervention. I remain of the opinion that there is very little likelihood of such events taking place based upon the interactions I observed in this visit. Interactions between boarders and with staff are the core of the service and serve to prevent circumstances where such events are likely.</p>
Risk Assessments Appendix B (11,16)	<p>During this visit I discussed the review processes for the oversight and reviews of all care plans and risk assessments once again, and the plans and risk assessments are under current review, awaiting responses from families and sign off by the co-head. The planning for new arrivals is underway and I agreed to undertake a full scrutiny of plans and risk assessments in my next visit.</p>
Placement Plans 7.2	<p>Plans are regularly reviewed by the senior Residential Leaders and I have no concerns related to this aspect of the work at Linden Lodge.</p>

Suitability of the building, furnishings & external environment.

During this Standard 3 visit I moved through Residential Provision at Richley House once again and noted the fact that the maintenance of all areas remains of a very high standard. There has been a deep clean across the Summer and this has given the floor a refreshed feel. The meeting with the Premises Manager highlighted how much attention to detail is put into the management of the fabric of the building and this makes the environment pleasant and a positive place to spend time.

The Head of Residential showed me developments in one kitchen area that sees greater levels of use of the equipment now possible through accessibility buttons, and also how announcing buttons have been added to kitchen cupboards, detailing the contents of these for the boarders to enable independence. The staff voices that are used are the staff in the service.

In addition, the bedrooms also have an announcement button outside them, along with an item of the boarders' choice. These announcements are recorded in the voice of one of the boarders as stated higher up this report. This is a lovely feature of the community.

I was also shown the eco-garden once again and noted the fact that harvesting has seen potatoes used in dinners for the boarders, and that the tomatoes are to be made into a chutney by the boarders soon. Some crops did not work out as well, but this is being used as a learning experience. A new scarecrow has also been created.

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

Upon arrival, I spoke to the Residential Leaders regarding recent and coming events for the school and Residential. After we had covered the recent context elements as detailed at the start of the report they informed me of a range of other aspects:

Innovative Support

There has been a development in the work undertaken for boarders in the way Alexa controls have been connected to electronic features in a bedroom of a boarder. This has seen them able to control elements such as lights, and potentially other features as well. This has taken place in collaboration with the family as the boarder also has an Alexa at home. This may develop into a model room at the Residential Service and could see others access this sort of support.

Recent Awards for Residents

The recent participation of a range of boarders in a competition organised by OTIS Lifts saw the school group come second across Europe and as the highest placed UK entrant. This is a wonderful achievement and saw the boarders in attendance at the award ceremony. They very much enjoyed the ceremony and the interaction that came about as part of it. The OTIS staff fed back the inspiration they have taken from spending time with the learners at Linden Lodge, and there has been some extremely positive interaction and social skills development as a result. Some 27 OTIS staff spent time at the school and have painted a number of benches in the outdoor spaces as well. This is a very positive connection for the school and heartening to hear about.

Virtual Reality App Full Launch

The Co-Head explained that following the soft launch event that I attended, there is to be a hard launch for all staff in November. There will be a presentation made to the charitable organisers that have been instrumental in this at this time.

Prospective Cinema Development

An open house visit to a respite service for Surrey by the Co-Head recently was a very informative collaboration. It has also led to a connection to a charity named 'Together for Cinema'. It has transpired that this organisation is involved in re-allocating resources and hardware from tech companies and will be installing a Cinema room on the ground floor of the Residential Block (potentially by January 2026). This promises to be a super addition to the resources at the school and I look forward to seeing it in a future visit.

Connection to St Piers' School

The connection to St Piers' school that has been established has seen a visit by their staff to Linden Lodge recently, and is set to see a reciprocal visit take place soon. Supportive work between staff is set to begin soon as well. This is a positive connection between services that I feel can only benefit both.

New Staff Consultations

I this visit I met with two of the newest staff to be added to the staff in the Residential Service and they reflected as detailed here:

The first explained that the role is a recent event after relocation from a former role as an OT. As such it is a big change, but the skillset and knowledge is hoped to be brought to bear in the role. The staff member reflected that the start has been based on gradually getting to know the boarders, reading plans, undertaking training and then (having met the boarders) re-reading and embedding this knowledge to best support them. The induction is part completed and the staff member is then to begin the Level 3 course required by the NMS. It has been a positive start to the role

The second explained that the role in Residential is in addition to a longer standing role as a TA in school. There has been a fresh induction undertaken, and lots of detail shared regarding care plans of the young people, especially the 1:1 that has been assigned. This staff member is due to begin the Level 3 course soon as well, and has signed up.

Both staff that I spoke to feel positive about the role and enjoy the impact their support has on the boarders. The attention to detail that is clearly in hand related to induction is a positive thing to note as well.

Time spent with Boarders and Staff

During the visit I was greeted by a number of boarders that I have come to know in the past few years, and they explained their recent experiences of boarding. I also noted the interactions between boarders and staff as being very positive with support for snacks and a healthy degree of healthy interaction and good humour evident. It was also evident that the boarders are developing close friendships over time (with two in particular being reflected upon as meeting up over the summer and their closeness was obvious in this visit as well). I observed boarders performing independent tasks such as putting cutlery away and feeding themselves, and then was informed of burger cooking plans in the evening for some. I then attended a Music club that took place in a different part of the school and saw how much this was enjoyed.

The social connections that come about from being a part of the Residential Community were very much evident.

Parental Consultation undertaken in the days after this visit

In the days that followed this visit I spoke to a parent of a boarder that has been attending the Residential Service approaching 7 months. The parent explained that the rationale for attendance at both the school, and residential in particular, was that medical issues have been a significant feature of late, and that being able to manage these

elements, as well as the focus upon life skills, independence as well as extending social skills and friendships are a very important priority as well.

The parent went on to express the fact that progress in all areas is good, and that solid friendships have been being made since starting boarding. There has also been development in applying skills learned in the Residential Service at home. Specifically, the parent stated that the boarder has been doing more cooking and application of self-care at home than had been the case beforehand. The parent also reflected upon the recent award won by the boarder as a part of the OTIS competition. It was very clear how much the boarder values their participation and is very proud of the achievement.

The parent shared that the staff at Linden Lodge are all super, and look after the boarder very well. There were no concerns at all raised.

Thematic Areas

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

Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision

This visit was another example of the service constantly evolving and leaders looking to build upon proven success with innovative ideas. This is not to say that the main strengths are ever overlooked as the care at the centre of the work that is done at Linden Lodge remains of the highest standard. I noted as such in my time in the service in this visit, and am keen to see the developments that have been described to me as the year passes.

I would like to thank everyone at Linden Lodge for their welcome in this visit, and I look forward to my next visit in term 2.

Name: Mark Goode **Date:** 06.10.25

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT

Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<p><u>Key worker impact review</u> For the Residential Lead to enable a scrutiny exercise related to the impact of Key Worker Sessions in the next Standard 3 visit in term 2.</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.</p>	<p>Mark will see the Keyworker session notes</p> <p>SCCIF will be reviewed and enhanced.</p>	<p>Term 2</p> <p>Term 2</p>
<p><u>Scrutiny of planning documents:</u> For preparations to be made related to planning documents so that the next Standard</p>	<p>Action plan will be developed, and for Mark to view on his next visit.</p>	<p>Term 2</p>

<p>3 visit can contain a review of the following documents once again:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Boarders' Plans and RAS (2) Action Plan Developments <p><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The effectiveness of leaders & managers</u></p> <p>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>SCCIF will be reviewed and enhanced.</p>	<p>Term 2</p>
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Head of Residential's Comments

<p>Thank you so much for your positive feedback in the report. I really appreciate the detailed comments, particularly around the parent feedback highlighting life skills, independence, and the development of social skills and friendships.</p> <p>Thank you also for the time you spent with the young people, listening to their views. Your input is valuable, especially as the service continues to evolve and grow.</p>
<p>Name: Danny Sinclair</p>
<p>Date: 9.10.2025</p>

Head Teacher's Comments

<p>We always look forward to Mark's unannounced visits as a great opportunity to showcase everything we do and to be able to reflect on any aspects that we could be doing differently to learn from. It is a pleasure to read about the positive comments from new staff and new parents. It validates all that we do in order to support our young people to become active and independent citizens within their communities.</p>
<p>Name: Sarah Norris</p>
<p>Date: 10/10/2025</p>

Formal Response from the Governing Body, Trustees, or Proprietor of the School

<p>It is helpful to read this positive report and it reflects well on the work and commitment of the whole school to the well-being of residential pupils at Richley House.</p>
<p>Evidence of very high standard of care and attention to those pupils is triangulated and that adds confidence for Governors of the excellent care offered to pupils. It is helpful to read tracking of plans made by staff at Richley House and it is helpful that the achievement of those plans is tracked by the Independent Visitor (IV).</p>
<p>In particular Governors look forward to the review of plans and risk assessment scheduled by the IV for the next visit.</p>
<p>Name: Kieran Travers</p>
<p>Date: 05/11/2025</p>