



## Standard 3 Visit

<b>Name of Service</b>	<b>Linden Lodge School</b>
<b>Date of previous visit</b>	<b>01.10.2025</b>
<b>Date of this visit</b>	<b>19.11.2025</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 Danny Sinclair: Head of Residential</b>

### 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 part of the second half term of the academic year, and was greeted by the Co-Head for Residential and the Head of Residential. We began by discussing the current context for the Residential Service and I accompanied the Head of Residential as he led the last session of a day of induction for new staff across different areas of the school. There have been no new boarders begin attending boarding yet this term, but the leaders explained that there are two that have recently begun processes that will see them start boarding soon. There have been some issues related to the health of one boarder, and funding for specialist equipment that has been a cause of a degree of delay, but this is seeing extended support offered.

We undertook an extended catch-up over a range of areas that are covered in the consultations section and I then covered all mandatory checks that are a part of all standard 3 visits that I take part in. I spent time in the boarding floors with staff and residents, and in the days following the visit I reached out to the parents of 2 boarders that are approaching a phase where transitions into colleges are a key feature of the work and support in place. These details are 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><b><u>Key worker impact review</u></b> 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><b><u>School Response following the last visit</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mark will see the Keyworker session notes</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Verification and follow up in this visit</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- During this visit I reviewed a selection of Key Worker session notes and discussed them with the Head of Residential.</li> <li>- The sessions are undertaken by the Head of Residential himself, and the Deputy Childcare Manager.</li> <li>- The nature of the boarders means that two distinct styles of sessions are undertaken:</li> <li>- (i) Boarders that have the capacity to lead the detail - this sees sessions being boarder led, related to their subject of choice and the context of their boarding and school situation. The details are well recorded and reflect a supportive culture being in place. This helps boarders to get a lot from sessions and feel empowered by them.</li> <li>- (ii) Boarders that are not verbal see an approach that uses Zones of Regulation and picture symbols. The approach sees involvement of staff that work directly with the boarders, and as such there is a degree of advocacy involved. We discussed ways of expanding the way that these boarders' voice is captured further, and I suggested that considering how the staff at St Piers approach gathering voice could help with this by seeing a different service's approach .</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Scrutiny of planning documents:</u></b></p> <p>For preparations to be made related to planning documents so that the next Standard 3 visit can contain a review of the following documents once again:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Boarders' Plans and RA's</li> <li>(2) Action Plan Developments and SCCIF</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>School Response following the last visit</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Action plan will be developed, and for Mark to view on his next visit.</li> <li>- SCCIF will be reviewed and enhanced.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Verification and follow up in this visit</u></b></p> <p>During this visit I reviewed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Boarders' Plans and Risk Assessments were reviewed and scrutinised as detailed in the mandatory checks section of this report below.</li> <li>(2) The SCCIF Audit was considered alongside Head of Residential and it illustrates high standards in evidence. It is also shared with the Residential Committee for scrutiny as evidenced in the notes that I have reviewed lower in this report.</li> <li>(3) There is also a detailed Action plan in place connected to the NMS and I have considered this in the consultations section below.</li> </ol>
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**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 1. We discussed the recent events for boarders and through this, I remain of the view that the care given remains as clearly focussed upon the best interests of the boarders as I have come to expect. I have no concerns following this visit related to safeguarding at Linden Lodge.

<b>Mandatory Areas</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<p><b>Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes</b> 20.9</p>	<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 1. Attendance figures for Boarders since my last visit in term 6 of last year have averaged at 88.8% for boarders, with a corresponding figure for day pupils of 82.8%. 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.</p>
<p><b>Complaints</b> 19.1, 19.2, 19.3</p>	<p>The Head of Residential explained that there have been no formal complaints since the date of my last visit in term 1. We further discussed the fact that a parent has been in touch over an aspect related to the recent round of photography and the selection of clothing worn in a photo that was returned home. The manner of the handling of this dialogue was explained to me, and I am clear that the dialogue maintained by the staff means such events are managed well. This case was done so in accordance with this method, and no concerns are evident as a result.</p>
<p><b>Health and Safety Checks:</b> Specifically, Fire Safety in this visit</p>	<p>This visit saw no checks made as I undertake such checks in broadly alternate visits, unless there is a pressing need to do so.</p>
<p><b>Sanctions</b> 20.6</p>	<p>I was once again informed that there have been no sanctions applied since my last visit in term 1. The time that I spent in the boarding space alongside staff and boarders was a further verification of the strong working relationships that exist between staff and boarders. The strengths of these relationships and hard work undertaken to share all</p>

	details widely with staff means that sanctions are very rare in my experience of visiting Linden Lodge.
<b>Restraint (including restrictive interventions)</b> 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7	There have been no incidents since my last visit in term 1 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.
<b>Risk Assessments</b> Appendix B (11,16)	During this visit I discussed the review processes for the oversight and reviews of all care plans and risk assessments once again. I then undertook a review of a sample of plans from both floors of the residential building. The planning for new arrivals is underway.
<b>Placement Plans</b> 7.2	Plans are regularly reviewed by the senior Residential Leaders and the sampled plans and Risk Assessments have a depth to them that is very impressive. The different sections are populated with all information held that supports strong care from staff related to all areas of oversight. The applicability of different documents to the specific needs of the boarders was clearly in evidence and as a result I have no concerns related to this aspect of the work at Linden Lodge. The plans and risk assessments are reviewed and kept up to date comprehensively.

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

During this Standard 3 visit I once again moved through the Residential Provision at Richley House and am happy to confirm the high standard of maintenance of all areas. The seasonal display in the entrance area has been changed to demonstrate the theme of people around the world, and is a pleasant addition to the building.

The Head of Residential then explained and showed me a newly refurbished part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor that has been converted to be a quiet lounge space, equipped minimally to encourage reflection, conversation and listening to music. It is equipped with a voice activated digital assistant to support this. It was also explained that the enhanced Fire Notices that have been implemented in Residential have now been rolled out across the school site.

The premises support boarders and staff well, feel well-proportioned, and enable a sense of familiarity that is needed for the boarders' needs. The Head of Residential fed back that Fire Drills are increasing in efficiency and speed to evacuate the buildings as well.

**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**

This visit saw the following areas discussed with the leaders of the Residential Service:

Update related to Cinema Development

The leaders explained that a recent visit has seen planning begun with the 'Together for Cinema' group, and has also seen practical connections with local contractors undertaken. The net result has been clear planning for the cinema to be a regularly used feature that truly supports accessibility for the borders, and their specific needs.

Connection to St Piers' School, Lingfield.

The connection to St Piers' school that has been established has seen a reciprocal visit by Linden Lodge staff to St Piers' in recent weeks. Supportive work between staff has been discussed and a tour of the premises and children's Residential Houses took place. Further work is set to take place related to mentoring, and a broader reflection made it clear that there are a number of areas where shared working practices can see this connection help standards and processes.

### Connection to Oak Lodge School, Balham.

The recently appointed Head of Care at Oak Lodge is set to visit soon, and this additional connection is a further example of sharing practice in the name of maintaining the highest of standards and mutually supportive collaboration. This openness to constant reflection and self-evaluation is a key part of ensuring standards remain high and is a central part of what makes Linden Lodge a special provision in my view.

### Connections in the South London Community

The Head of Residential explained that connections are working well with both AFC Wimbledon, and Crystal Palace Football Clubs. This sees tickets allocated to boarders', families and staff, and the presentation of presents at a Christmas Party that involves players. These connections create joy, and are a very positive feature.

### Individual Staff Development

The Head of Residential and I also discussed how ongoing training for all staff levels can be assured to retain freshness. This included his role and I made a few suggestions over areas to consider as the year passes. It is a feature of the school that there is a refreshing feeling of always looking to expand expertise and skills in staff, to make sure that the boarders' experiences have staff that are up to date, well-trained, and always willing to embrace new challenges.

### Leavers' planning

There are some 5 boarders set to leave the care of Linden Lodge this academic year, and through discussion with the leaders, it became clear that this process has started with college visits planned and discussion over options underway. I agreed to focus on this in a coming visit after Christmas.

### **Other Features of this visit**

#### **Induction Training**

At the start of this visit I accompanied the Head of Residential to the last session of the induction day for new staff. This saw staff from across the school (teacher, site team, administration, therapy, and a teaching assistant among them) receive an overview of the setup in the Residential Service and it was clear how prominent the service was presented as. They asked a number of probing questions and I explained the role played by Independent Visitors. The purpose of the 24-hour curriculum setup and how Residential work is interwoven into the learning of boarders was explained (as well as any practical benefits to boarders and families – less transitions and anxiety, life skills development and independence among them). The way that Residential was presented is a strong feature of this training as it was clear to the staff how important boarding is to the school.

#### **Time spent with Boarders and Staff**

During the visit I was again greeted by many boarders that I now know well, and who chat freely with me. One explained the fact that cooking for her family the next evening (and planning for this) was a key part of the evening ahead. She explained what was being planned and how this was set to happen. It was evident that she is very keen to see this go well, and was later noted to be being supported extremely well by staff towards this end.

I also noted boarders engaged in table football, relaxing in lounges, cooking using an air-fryer, playing games and spending time in each other's company and the company of staff. The whole Residential Building was vibrant and filled with activity.

## **Documents Reviewed**

### **Residential Committee Minutes**

The most recent minutes were shared and it is clear from the content that the service is well monitored and a transparency exists related to elements of oversight. The Head of Residential gives a full update and the value attached to the committee means that the SCCIF overview is shared and scrutinised, as are my Independent Visitor reports. The arrangements being made to see Governors' visits take place is evident, and it is very clear that the wider ways that the Residential Service is being developed (St Piers' visit, premises development, and individual boarders' progress) are also shared. There is strong support and scrutiny in evidence and this is a key reason that the service has remained strong and stays reflective.

### **Residential Action Plan and Updated SCCIF Audit**

These were both shared with me and I have considered them in the current context:

The SCCIF audit is a live document that is kept under review, and as the service has achieved consecutive outstanding judgements in the last two inspections, it reflects a confidence that evidence is in place that supports this. The very fact that it is kept under review and is reflected upon by governors regularly is a sign of the school having no hint of complacency at all.

The action plan document uses the National Minimum Standards and details all actions that are taking place as 'ongoing'. The details contains references to the regularity of the review processes that are in place, and it essentially means that the standards are constantly being reflected upon, and work taking place to maintain standards, and build upon them.

Together, these documents showcase the determination to retain the current OFSTED rating through making sure that all that can be done to meet and surpass expectations in terms of standards is done.

### **Staff Survey**

This has been undertaken recently and has been shared with me as a part of this visit. There are 10 areas examined and all of them illustrate a very positive view held by staff in regard to the following areas:

Pride in working at Linden Lodge's Residential setup, Safety of the boarders, Consistency of Behaviour management, Collaborative working between academic and care staff, safeguarding training, Professional development of staff, Leadership, Training regarding all boarders' needs, Awareness of staff related to the aims of residential, how well boarders are looked after.

It is encouraging to note the positivity of the feedback, and reflects the care and standards that I observe in my visits accurately. There is no negative feedback contained in the document at all.

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

In the days that followed this visit I spoke to the parents of two boarders that have been attending Linden Lodge School for a prolonged period, and that are both in the process of considering their next steps for support after their time at Linden Lodge ends. One is around 18 months away from this transition, and the other is in the final year of attendance at Linden Lodge.

The first explained that the boarder has been attending for between 4 and 5 years, and that key to this has been a focus on independence skills and rehabilitation after injury. The parent reflected that whilst the service is

positive as an experience, especially related to having access to people that the boarder can communicate effectively with, there could be more specific support for the particular injury and its impact on learning. In detail the parent felt that finding more creative ways of the boarder being encouraged to engage in sessions when reluctant would be useful. It may be the case that this is applicable across the school day, rather than solely in Residential time.

The parent then reflected upon the fact that support to attend colleges in advance of a leaving date that is 18 months away has started well. 1 visit has happened, and there is another scheduled. I advocated attending as many as possible and the parent is keen to be supplied with contacts to as many as possible.

The parents of the second boarder stated that attendance at Linden Lodge has been for a prolonged period in excess of 10 years, and that boarding has been accessed for around 2 years as a means to prepare the boarder for the needed transition to college far further from home. The parents stated that there have been a number of clear benefits of attending the Residential service; these include the extended activities that take place through the extending of the classroom environment into evenings, and that there have been great benefits reaped through the social time with peers. The parents feel that the boarder has grown up a lot thanks to the time spent with a range of peers in Residential.

Residential Staff were reflected upon as being very polite and nice to deal with. The coming transition to an adults' college environment is being navigated presently and it is clear that the family (as the transition is a year prior to the first boarder discussed above – for September 2026) have seen engagement with three specialist colleges. This process is going well and it is clear that the process is felt to be supporting the family towards a placement that will meet needs. The parents reflected that the complexities of needs present for their son had made the initial phase of boarding a period of challenge.

Their feedback also saw reflections upon areas where liaison with residential staff has taken place related to aspects of medication administration, overnight events that have taken place, and how personal care is administered. I have liaised with the residential team and fed back these reflections to the leaders, who have openly considered them with me.

It was clear that the parents feel that boarding experience has been an overwhelmingly positive one and, whilst they also commented upon a range of features that are not under the control of the residential service in my call to them, they also stated that teachers have given feedback that their son is energised in class in morning sessions, indicating a very positive impact of overnight stays. This, alongside the evident preparation for onward movement to a college environment, is a clear demonstration of how important this period of attending boarding has been for their son.

As a result of these examples of parental feedback, I remain impressed with the way the staff in residential at Linden Lodge provide support for boarders with extremely complex scenarios, as well as their families. It is to the credit of all staff that parents feel happy to speak to me as independent visitor and share their experiences in as open and transparent a way as has been the case in this visit.

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

### Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision

Thank you for a further visit where it was clear that standards remain high and are reflected upon by all stakeholders involved in the Residential provision. The ongoing and constant reflections that I have noted are typical of what I see when I visit, and I can see the care and attention translated into high standards in the care that I saw.

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 3. I wish everyone a good Christmas Break, and look forward to continuing our work together into 2026.

**Name:** Mark Goode

**Date:** 25.11.25

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT

Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<p><b><u>Key Worker Session Processes</u></b> To consider connecting the feedback on the key worker sessions to the link-up with St Piers' school in terms of how the sessions are constructed.</p> <p><b><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria); The overall experiences and progress of children</u></b> There is significant evidence of change and improvement for children because of the actions of the staff working at the school. The progress of children is exceptional, taking into account their starting points.</p>	<p>We will contact St Piers and get feedback, on keyworker sessions.</p>	<p>Term 3</p>
<p><b><u>Parental Feedback</u></b> To consider the feedback as presented in the parental calls in this report.</p> <p><b><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria); The effectiveness of leaders and managers</u></b> Leaders and managers develop and maintain professional relationships between the school and partner agencies that ensure the best possible care, experiences and futures for children.</p>	<p>Parental feedback is important to us, we ensure we follow-up with parents and address and support and advice they may need.</p> <p>We will continue to have regular meetings with other professional and partner agencies</p>	<p>Term 3</p> <p>Term 3</p>

### Head of Residential's Comments

Thank you for your visit and for spending time with us. We appreciate the way you captured the views of parents and young people during your time here, as well as the feedback you gathered through your consultations with parents.

We look forward to working with Oak Lodge School and St Piers, and working with other establishments to share good practice and learning from each other.

<b>Name:</b> Danny Sinclair
<b>Date:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2025

Head Teacher's Comments
Mark's visits provide us with an incredible opportunity to review and share all that we are doing to keep the young people in Richley House at the centre of all that we do. It is always a pleasure to share practice and be reflective in what we do and we look forward to continued collaborative working with other provisions.
<b>Name:</b> Sarah Norris
<b>Date:</b> 2 December 2025

Formal Response from the Governing Body, Trustees, or Proprietor of the School
<p>This is a positive report and a joy to read. The evidence of good quality care and the safety of residence is triangulated and well supported in the text of the report.</p> <p>It is very helpful to hear the drive of the leaders at the School to make connections with other schools and the community in order to enhance the care and welfare of residents and their families.</p> <p>It is interesting to read about the plans to enhance the input of non-verbal residents to the key-worker sessions and Governors will be interested to read of that development. The Clinical Safeguarding groups has agreed that the plans made and reported upon by the Independent Visitor will be included in the reports from the Residential Meeting group and, in that way Trustees will be kept informed of the focus and the progress of those plans.</p>
<b>Name:</b> Kieran Travers
<b>Date:</b> 05/12/2025