



## Standard 3 Visit

<b>Name of Service</b>	<b>Oak Lodge School</b>
<b>Date of previous visit</b>	<b>12/01/2026</b>
<b>Date of this visit</b>	<b>09/03/2026</b>
<b>Standard 3 Visitor</b>	<b>Mark Goode</b>
<b>Time of visit</b>	<b>15.00 – 17.30</b>
<b>Visit Supported by</b>	<b>Head of Care – Saul Allison Headteacher – Caroline Rowlandson</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 (as of 5<sup>th</sup> September 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

Oak Lodge is a regional maintained Special Education Needs school in the London Borough of Wandsworth, providing education for pupils aged 10 to 19; who are D/deaf and/or who have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). *(The term D/deaf is used throughout education and research to describe students who are Deaf (British Sign Language users) and deaf (who are hard of hearing and tend to communicate more orally)).*

Many of the pupils have additional needs e.g. ASD, Motor Difficulties, Visual Impairment, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, etc. and require a differentiated curriculum and more intensive support to facilitate their learning. The school aims to support the development of each student's full language and communication potential using a student-centred multi-modal approach to language development which includes BSL, Sign Supported English (SSE), spoken English, written English and the use of visual and kinaesthetic learning strategies. Students benefit from being educated in an inclusive multimodal communication environment with additional intensive pupil support to facilitate their learning when required. Oak Lodge is centrally located just south of central London near the A205 (South Circular). Rail services are excellent with Balham and Clapham Junction rail station and Clapham South tube stations within walking distance. To date they have pupils from 32 different local authorities and offer weekly residential facilities which have been praised by Ofsted. The residential service aims to provide a safe and nurturing environment which allows young people to develop skills to become independent and develop their D/deaf identity. Residential boarding is offered Monday-Friday for young people who attend Oak Lodge School and have an EHCP and additional support with social development from Wandsworth Borough and across London. Phoenix House offers up to four nights a week, term-time boarding for students aged 11-19 years. Accommodating up to 19 students per night, the unit is staffed by a professional team who specialise in working with young D/deaf people with additional needs.

This visit took place in the third week of the fourth half term of the school year on a Monday afternoon and upon arrival I was greeted by the Head of Care, whereupon I undertook an extensive consultation, and reviewed all mandatory aspects required of a Standard 3 visit. The Head of Care explained that a new boarder has begun attending in earnest since the date of my last visit in term 3, and that they are settling in well. I met this boarder in the course of the visit and can confirm their happiness in boarding. The Head of Care also shared the fact that a new casual female staff member has been recruited to support the girls' boarding setup, and that other recruitment is taking place to support morning routines. I followed up on recommendations that I made in the last visit and we discussed coming features of the work of the service. In the days following the visit I have also reviewed an updated version of the Statement of Purpose and reached out to the parents of two boarders, including the most recently started boarder in the days that followed this visit in order to capture their views. All of these elements are included in the various sections of the report below.

### Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and Verification by Independent Visitor in next visit
<p><b><u>Service Improvement Plan and Life Skills Programme.</u></b> For the Head of Care to update me on developments related to the targeted improvement processes, with a particular focus upon the Life Skills Programme, when I next visit ahead of the Easter break in term 4.</p>	<p><b><u>Provider's Response</u></b> At beginning of this term, the revamped Life Skills Programme has been introduced to both the team and gradually to the students. Continuous working relationship with school's well-being team and students' pastoral teachers. OT visits Residential one evening week.</p> <p><b><u>Verification in this visit</u></b> This visit saw me updated on this aspect of the work of the Residential Service and the details are captured in the consultations section below.</p>

## How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.

During this visit the Head of Care explained that there have been no fresh causes for concern that have arisen in the Residential Service that have been referred outside of the school for LADO or Safeguarding support since my last visit in term 3. We also covered the fact that there have been some elements raised by boarders themselves related to online activity. The fact that boarders have raised these elements voluntarily, seeking support, is an indication that trust is a significant strength of the service. The work undertaken has since been shared with the main school (especially the 6<sup>th</sup> form) and this has helped to safeguard others in a broad sense. There are no concerns related to safeguarding processes as a result of this visit.

### Mandatory Areas

Topic	Comments
<b>Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes</b> 20.9	During this visit I undertook a discussion around attendance and I was informed that no boarders have been excluded or gone missing since my last visit in term 3. The information shared showed that attendance remains strong with an overall attendance figure since my last visit in term 2 for this academic year so far for boarders at an average of 86.9%. This includes the impact of several recent arrivals, and that have undertaken phased introduction. When the lowest of these (an outlier at 23.8% attendance) is redacted, the overall % rises for the remainder to 90.9%. The impact of Residential on attendance is a positive feature and supports learning very well.
<b>Complaints</b> 19.1, 19.2, 19.3	The Head of Care explained that there have been no situations that have led to formal complaints since my last visit in term 3. The opposite was reflected upon with the Head of Care sharing the fact that positive feedback has been received related to the impact of boarding, and that this was stated as showing itself in the fact that a boarder was reported as being happier at home and communicating more effectively since beginning boarding. I suggested that a running log could be created to showcase such feedback, and could be in place alongside keeping a complaint log ready to store any that arise.
<b>Sanctions/Consequences</b> 20.6	During this visit the Head of Care explained that there have been no sanctions required since the last visit I undertook in term 3. The Head of Care explained the use of restorative approaches regarding one behavioural incident that saw the boarder in question placed in a position where the impact of their conduct was made plain in a very non-confrontational fashion. This led to a reflection and the boarder then approaching a staff member later wishing to discuss the events and apologising. This was a clear example of role modelling and learning from actions and is commendable. The Head of Care explained that this has been captured in an update of the boarder's Positive Behaviour Plan as well. This is all very strong practice.
<b>Restraint/Safe Hold (including restrictive interventions)</b> 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7	This visit saw the Head of Care explain that there have been no incidents of restraint of any kind since my last visit in term 3. The details above once again illustrate how supportive the service is and this sees boarders given the chance to reflect and learn from their actions. In addition, the Head of Care stated that Staff are well trained and there is regular review of safety and interventions processes. They are then able to identify anxiety triggers and bring early intervention and de-escalation to bear.
<b>Risk Assessments</b> Appendix B (11,16)	This visit saw the Head of Care share the fact that all Care Plans, Risk Assessments and Positive Behaviour Plans have been updated and have all been monitored using the well managed checking system that is in place. I reviewed a sample of these plans and pursued the newest arrival through the paperwork that is in place. Each of the three main documents held are populated with well-informed and fulsome detail. This means that all staff are well prepared to work with the boarder, and understand the needs and default responses that are likely. This knowledge is updated regularly and remains relevant as a result. The Head of Care reflected satisfaction that the deep dive undertaken by OFSTED
<b>Placement Plans</b> 7.2	(This cell is merged with the previous row's comment)

in the recent inspection captured the attention to detail that is in place and their happiness with what they inspected was mirrored in the detail shared with me.

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

This visit saw me tour and spend time in the Residential Space again, and I noted the vivid displays in a number of areas:

- (1) The Life skills Programme has its own dedicated board that illustrates the successes that have been seen, along with a visual representation of the skills as well. This is a good feature that demonstrates simply what is taking place.
- (2) There is a very clearly expressed range of activities that has been set out for the term up to the Easter Holiday. This gives the boarders a chance to look ahead and be aware of what to expect. I discussed recent and coming events with several of the boarders, and it was clear that they are aware of the coming activities and look forward to them. This helps with the atmosphere and awareness in the Residential Service.
- (3) There is also an extremely positive feature in the shape of the 'Deaf Role Models' gallery. This details the deaf staff that work in the Residential Service and contains photos of them enjoying real-life activities. Examples include holidays and trips, as well as recreational activities. I discussed the inclusion of this feature with the Head of Care and he reflected that there had previously been a gallery with a focus upon famous or well-known Deaf people and their achievements. The Head of Care reflected that the boarders had not been that interested, but that seeing people they know well engaging in such activities is designed to support the borders in realising that their aspirations can be met. This is a very important feature and has real power.

The Girls' Floor has recently had a new door retaining mechanism fitted that is useful for safety improvements, and the Head of Care also explained that research is underway related to the coming school building developments with the Headteacher at a visit related to this. The Residential Setup is a feature under consideration.

### **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 Headteacher**

This visit saw me arrive on a day when the Headteacher was off site, and as a result I offered to capture any information that was wished to be shared. It is clear that termly reviews are taking place related to the Residential Service's Improvement Plan, and that the Residential Leaders are well supported and regularly required to review the progress and standards in place.

#### **Consultation with the Head of Care**

The Head of Care and I discussed a range of elements related to the operations of the Residential Service and these are detailed as:

#### **Life Skills Programme;**

The Head of Care explained that there has been development in the operations of the Life Skills Programme and that some initial inertia has been the subject of focus recently. Most of the students are now involved in the operation of the process, and I was informed that a visual board is in place in the lounge area. I noted this in the course of my time in the space in this visit as well, and it is clear that it is developing. The Head of Care also shared a folder that details the monitoring of the skills, and it is clear that some boarders are further along with this than others. This is closely connected to the appraisal process for the key leader of this area (appraisal is discussed in more general terms below). The Head of Care drew attention to how smaller goals that build towards a longer

term aim is being seen to have impact in a number of boarders' work. It is clear overall that this aspect has developed, although it is a work in progress, and the Head of Care explained that a report is being prepared for Governors that I will look to review in the course of my next visit in term 5.

#### Statement of Purpose

The Head of Care explained that he has recently updated the Statement and issued it onto the school website. Updates include the newest staff members, the fact that the Head of Care is now in a permanent role, and the recent OFSTED inspection details. I then reviewed the new version of the statement online and am happy to report that all changes cited recently by the Head of Care are embedded in this. In my view it meets the requirements of the National Minimum Standards well and gives a clear insight into the operations that exist.

#### External Visits

The Head of Care explained that there has been a recent visit to a similar provision to Oak Lodge (in that it is a Residential School for Deaf Children). The cohort are not learners with other additional needs, but the sharing of practice was a very useful experience for the Head of Care. He reflected that it was useful to support another service and reflect upon methods that have been employed to good effect for systems and staff leadership. It was clear that the experience has helped the Head of Care to reflect what is strong at Oak Lodge and how the staff team's strength is pivotal to the success that has been seen. I agree fully with this, and agree with the conclusion that hard work has seen the Residential Service gain the feeling of a home. This was once again exemplified in the time I spent in the presence of the staff and boarders (this is captured below). The Head of Care is set to visit two other Residential Provisions (one of which will be a service that Oak Lodge often sees boarders move on to, which will support transitions). This aligns well with the Residential Development Plan as well. It is my view that the quality of what happens in the Residential Service can only benefit from this exposure and I commend it highly.

#### Improvement Plan and aligning with staff appraisals

The Head of Care explained that the Residential Improvement Plan is moving forward and is reviewed monthly alongside the Deputy Head of Care and the Headteacher. This process enables actions to have impact and helps staff to complete actions. In addition, the Head of Care explained how staff have recently all seen appraisal targets up to the summer added. alongside the recent (and ongoing) focus on staff training that has been taking place. These appraisals see 3 common targets, and one personalised in ways that align well with the intentions and detail in the Residential Improvement Plan, and this is very sensible in my view. I agreed to support this process in the next visit by reviewing the status of the plan at this point.

#### Animals and Therapeutic Impact

During this visit I met the most recent addition to the service in the shape of a recently introduced and very calm dog, Poppy. The boarders have quickly bonded with Poppy and the mutual affection was evident in this visit. Alongside the presence of a rabbit that also supports learners'/boarders' mental health, this is a valued asset. There are plans to see Poppy potentially trained as a therapy dog and I very much enjoyed seeing her impact upon the boarders which was evident in this visit.

#### Time Spent in the Residential Space alongside Staff and boarders

This visit saw one of the boarder's birthday taking place. This was a positive feature of the evening, and as it was a Monday, the boarders generally stay on site as many need this time to settle into the week after a full-on day (as they arrive from home and go straight into lessons after a long journey in for some). I noted that one boarder and a staff member were making a cake for the boarder with a birthday (at her request). As this was happening, other boarders were clearly willing and able to use the kitchen facilities (a feature of independence that may have the capacity to be captured in the life skills work potentially).

All boarders were offered the chance to speak to me and I greeted all as I arrived. I spoke with the most recently started boarder who explained that he enjoys boarding, and explained that he is keen on the trips - especially citing the recent trampolining trip and a coming indoor funfair trip as highlights of the term. Other boarders were happily going about their evening, enjoying each other's company and chatting to each other. The atmosphere was akin to that of a hall of residence in the evening after a day of lessons and really did feel like a home from home in many ways. The pleasant spring weather meant that they had the opportunity to go outside but were all looking forward to dinner and celebrating the birthday of one of their number afterwards, along with the cake of course.

**Consultation with two parents, including the parent of the most recently started boarder**

In the days that followed this visit I reached out to speak to the parents of two boarders. By the time of the completion of this report I have been able to reach one parent. The parent detailed the fact that the boarder in question has recently begun boarding. The parent explained that the boarder enjoys their time in Residential and that the parent themselves has been in the school, viewed the Residential Service space and the boarder's room.

The parent explained that initially the boarder had explained that there were a few features that required getting used to, with food being a key area, but that of late this has settled and the boarder is doing well. The parent expressed no concerns when asked and the boarder's progress was commented upon.

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

**Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision**

This visit was a further very positive experience as it illustrated that the staff and the Head of Care continue to have the highest of expectations of each other, and set a high bar for the support and care brought to bear for all boarders.

The care noted in this visit was as strong as I have noted in the past and shows that the service is continually looking forward and willing to accept critique in the name of ensuring standards remain strong and that any form of complacency is avoided. I thank everyone for their ongoing warm welcome and I look forward to my next visit in term 5.

**Name:** Mark Goode                      **Date:** 13.03.26

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Comments from Provider</b>	<b>Expected Completion Date</b>
<p><b><u>Development of Residential Systems &amp; Evidence</u></b>                      For the leaders of the Residential Setup to continue to evolve the Like Skills system in a way that generates evidence of impact, and to consider the creation of a compliments log to sit alongside recording of any complaints as time passes.</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>Our initial Life skills report is currently being created to present overall data and evidence of progression of the Life skills system.</p> <p>We will continue to secure the children’s views and their requests on activities especially during summer term with more outdoor activities.</p>	<p>Term 5 2025-26</p>
<p><b><u>Improvement Plan Reviews</u></b>                      For Leaders to prepare to be able to share updates related to the Residential Improvement Plan in my next visit.</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>Our Improvement plan will be reviewed and updated prior to Term 5 visit.</p> <p>Staff have their 3-month review on their appraisals targets, to be conducted May 2025.</p>	<p>Term 5 2025-26</p>

**Head of Residential’s Comments**

<p>Thank you for another positive report, reflecting the consistency of good compliance of paperwork being completed in a good standard and within time delegated to the team. The feedback from the new boarder and the animals and therapeutic impact is positive as this has become new in Residential during this term. Our Life skills system continues to roll out well and a report presenting overall data and evidence of progression of the Life skills system before the end of this term, to be shared with the stakeholders including parents.</p>
<p><b>Name: Saul Allison</b></p>
<p><b>Date: 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b></p>

**Head Teachers’ Comments**

<p>Thank you Mark for capturing all the excellent work taking place in residential. Lots of areas for development are moving along nicely and are captured in your report. Our skills for life programme has been our main focus this term and there are may points that you have been able to evidence progress.</p> <p>Our independent Listening visitor has made her termly visit to the provision and captured some areas for the senior team to consider moving forward.</p> <p>Our staff have been working hard on their accredited courses and good progress is being made towards our Ofsted target.</p>
<p><b>Name: Caroline Rowlandson</b></p>
<p><b>Date: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b></p>

**Formal Response from the Governing Body, Trustees, or proprietor of the school**

Another positive report, reflecting the continued strength of our residential provision, particularly its strong safeguarding culture, high-quality relationships and nurturing environment. Huge thanks to our staff team for their ongoing hard work and commitment.

We're encouraged by the absence of concerns, the positive impact on attendance and wellbeing and the progress of the Life Skills Programme. We support next steps to further strengthen evidence of impact, including the development of a Life Skills report, the introduction of a compliments log and the continued review of the Residential Improvement Plan. We remain confident in the leadership and the ongoing development of the provision and look forward to reviewing progress at our next visit.

**Name: Louisa Steensma Williamson and Helen Whitmore, Co-Link Governors**

**Date: 25 March 2026**