



## Standard 3 Visit

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|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Name of Service</b>        | <b>Oak Lodge School</b>            |
| <b>Date of previous visit</b> | <b>09/03/2026</b>                  |
| <b>Date of this visit</b>     | <b>21/04/2026</b>                  |
| <b>Standard 3 Visitor</b>     | <b>Mark Goode</b>                  |
| <b>Time of visit</b>          | <b>14.00 – 16.30</b>               |
| <b>Visit Supported by</b>     | <b>Head of Care – Saul Allison</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 second week of the fifth half term of the school year, shortly after the Easter Break, on a Tuesday 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 once again. The Head of Care explained that there have been no new boarders begin attending since my last visit in term 4, and that no boarders have stopped boarding either. The Head of Care also shared the fact that staffing has been added to with 2 staff starters. One a female to support breakfast cover and one from the TA staff in the school (who knows the boarders from that work). I followed up on recommendations that I made in the last visit and we discussed the current status of boarders and the service generally. I attended the handover meeting that took place at the start of the boarding shift and spent time alongside staff and boarders during the beginning of the evening. In the days following the visit I reviewed the notes from a visit by the Independent Listener as part of the work undertaken, and reached out to the parents of a boarder that is approaching the end of their time at the school. 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>Development of Residential Systems &amp; Evidence</u></b><br/>                     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>School response following the previous visit</u></b><br/>                     Our initial Life skills report is currently being created to present overall data and evidence of progression of the Life skills system.<br/>                     We will continue to secure the children's views and their requests on activities especially during summer term with more outdoor activities.</p> <p><b><u>Verification and follow up in this visit.</u></b><br/>                     Ahead of this visit taking place the Head of Care shared the first data that has been generated related to the revamped life-skills programme and we discussed this in the course of the visit. My reflections are contained within the consultations section below:</p> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b><u>Improvement Plan Reviews</u></b><br/>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><br/>Leaders and managers know their strengths and weaknesses well and can provide evidence of improvement over a sustained period.</p> | <p><b><u>School response following the previous visit</u></b><br/>Our Improvement plan will be reviewed and updated prior to Term 5 visit. Staff have their 3-month review on their appraisals targets, to be conducted May 2025.</p> <p><b><u>Verification and follow up in this visit.</u></b><br/>This was discussed in the course of the visit and the details are included in the consultations section below:</p> |
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### **How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.**

During this visit the Head of Care explained that there has been a concern that is currently under the DSL of another Residential Service in a different part of the country and is being managed very thoroughly in my view. The Head of Care detailed a robust response in terms of conduct of a boarder, and of a response in terms of proactive education that is taking place related to these events to support learning. There are no concerns that related to safeguarding processes as a result of this visit in my view.

### **Mandatory Areas**

| <b>Topic</b>   | <b>Comments</b>   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes</b><br/>20.9</p>                            | <p>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 4. The information shared showed that attendance remains strong with an overall attendance figure since my last visit in term 4 for this academic year so far for boarders at an average of 91.38%. This represents an increase from last term's figures and illustrates the impact of Residential on attendance remaining as a positive feature that supports learning.</p>   |
| <p><b>Complaints</b><br/>19.1, 19.2, 19.3</p>  | <p>The Head of Care explained that there have been no situations that have led to formal complaints since my last visit in term 4. This overall positive reflection is further validated by the way the Independent Listener has supported feedback from all residents.</p>   |
| <p><b>Sanctions/Consequences</b><br/>20.6</p>  | <p>During this visit the Head of Care explained that there has been one consequence applied to the boarding status of one young person. This has been the result of a pattern of behaviour including having an impact on others. The boarder has had their days boarding reduced from 4 per week to 2 and had a behaviour contract agreed (that is signed by the boarder and relates to some clear expectations). This is a strong response and is set to be reviewed after an agreed period to see if it has produced the desired results. The Head of Care explained that this is being implemented alongside a positive behaviour plan. I feel this is suitably strong practice.</p> |
| <p><b>Restraint/Safe Hold (including restrictive interventions)</b> 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7</p> | <p>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 4. 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, during this visit I noted the skilled way the staff enabled a reflection period when boarders joined the staff for the evening. A pair of residents had entered in a fashion that prompted some regulation time and this was handled very calmly, and to great effect.</p>   |
| <p><b>Risk Assessments</b><br/>Appendix B (11,16)</p>  | <p>This visit saw the Head of Care share the fact that all Care Plans, Risk Assessments and Positive Behaviour Plans are once again under consideration by the staff team. We discussed the fact that plans have relatively few changes applied as time passes, but we also reflected the fact that the annual OFSTED Inspection saw positive reflections and an overall Outstanding Judgement. The plans and risk assessments underpin the care that</p>   |
| <p><b>Placement Plans</b><br/>7.2</p>  |   |

was commented upon as follows; *“Each child has a risk assessment that provides staff with clear guidance and individualised strategies to manage risks. This ensures that children are supported by staff who understand how to keep them safe. Highly effective planning by the staff minimises risks both inside and outside of the school”*. The plans are checked at least termly and this meets the requirements of the NMS well, leading to the care that has raised the comment from OFSTED. As such the process is strong in my view.

### **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 had an update with new targets in place for all boarders that have been updated since the Easter Holiday.
- (2) This is added to with a ‘star’ based reward system. This is also new since Easter.

These new displays help boarders to have a good understanding of the systems and are a sensible use of the space. All spaces remain well maintained, and very clean. This supports the boarders’ choices well and dovetails well into the newly presented Life Skills system.

### **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 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:

As stated higher in this report, the Head of Care shared a recently produced overview of progress in the new life skills targets. The data is very clearly presented and reflects the progress made well. It represents a very strong start, and we discussed its use together. The targets are regularly reviewed and lead to changes each half term. Key workers discuss targets with each boarder and the agreed two termly targets are also shared with staff on a live board in the staff room. This helps the staff to remain focussed on the targets through the work that they do.

The system enables tracking of individual and the boarding cohort as a group and will see regular reports produced as evidence of the impact of the system.

##### Reward Charts and System

The Head of Care shared a newly started reward system that sees boarders awarded stars for achievements. This is displayed for all to see, and also gathered in a centrally stored booklet in a communal space. The book and display currently contain 3 awarded stars but the system is days old and this is set to be carried on as term passes.

##### Residential Improvement Plan

The Head of Care explained that this was due to be reviewed in the days following this visit alongside the Headteacher. The nature of an unannounced visit makes timing of such reviews happen in this way at times. There are clearly significant areas that have been built upon since my last visit (the Life Skills Programme being a case in point), and the Head of Care explained a key current focus being the development of a comparison of the Residential Service with 4 other Residential Providers of different sorts. Two of the visits that are supporting this

have taken place, and two are set to happen ahead of my next visit, and as such I will look to review the outcome when the next visit takes place in term 6, hopefully of both the Improvement Plan, and the Comparison document.

### **Review of Visit Undertaken by 'Independent Listener'**

As part of this visit the Head of Care shared a recently received report from an Independent Listener that has given useful feedback related to a wide range of the areas of support. I was particularly impressed with the level of detail gathered from individual residents related to the views and feelings about their targets and how they feel about their time in the Residential Service overall. Each discussion was very much based upon the areas that boarders themselves wished to raise and saw suggestions made for the staff to consider.

In addition, the listener shared reflections related to; the use of a visual questionnaire as a means to support new boarders, the way language and communication is supported with feedback suggesting incorporating more English on the display boards and within activities, the strength of the reward chart and displays, and a suggestion to incorporate the use of QR codes alongside school.

This document detailed a way that the opinions of the boarders are being gathered in creative ways and are used to support innovation and the responses to the ideas is very good practice

### **Handover Meeting**

As I had arrived earlier than any of my visits I was able to observe a handover meeting that took place prior to the start of the evening of boarding in this visit. This was led by the Deputy Head of Care as shift lead, and attended by all staff that were working (including the Head of Care).

The meeting centred around reflection upon recent events and the boarding shift that had occurred the previous evening. There was discussion over sleep readiness and the time that boarders settled. The staff had a discussion about the best way to prepare for the coming shift and allocations. This saw a focus upon the practical elements of allocating staff to boarders, and it was clear that all staff are kept informed on all areas related to all boarders.

There had been an altercation between boarders the previous evening and part of the meeting saw the events unpicked to support the evening coming. It was clear that all voices were heard and understood.

The evening coming was set to see a trip out to Wandsworth Common take place for boarders that wished to go, and alternatives were lined up for others as well. This led to a pro-active discussion over the safety elements in the Residential Space and what could be left out (or removed until boarders had settled). There was also a Fire Alarm test due that staff were informed of. Behaviour support for one boarder in particular was discussed and a PBS plan being followed was reinforced.

The meeting was wide ranging and detailed in terms of the organisation of the events to follow. This was important as there were some 15 boarders during the evening.

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

As boarders arrived it was clear that there was a sense of energy from some (but not all). Boarders then moved to the rooms to set their possessions in them, and some returned to the communal spaces. Two boarders were engaged in a disagreement, and the Head of Care noted this almost instantly and stepped in to make sure both had sufficient space and time to reflect and then the issue was to be discussed when all were calm.

The boarders settled quickly after this, and I spoke to a number of the boarders with support from a BSL interpreter. Each boarder was given time and support as needed by different staff as had been discussed earlier in the staff briefing. I interacted with as many boarders as wished to, and the staff skill in reading and responding to the cues that the boarder gave off was subtle and very intuitive. As a result, the boarders were able to move to their trip to Wandsworth Common, or to their own self-directed work.

**Consultation with a parent of a boarder set to leave soon.**

In the days that followed this visit I reached out to speak to the parent of a boarder that is soon set to leave the supportive care of the Residential Service. This saw the parent state that the boarder (who is now 20 and had his stay extended by the local authority) has been undertaking stays as it was felt it was the best way to support the boarder in building towards supported living by seeing him embedded and surrounded by peers that also use sign language. The parent went on to explain that boarding has been in place for 4 years, and the impact has been transformational in terms of independence skills and confidence. The boarder’s use of sign language has increased vastly and the mixing with similar peers has seen his socialisation dramatically increase. The parent feels this is largely down to the fact that boarding has been in place. The boarder was prone to outbursts and frustration spilling over prior to beginning boarding, but this has not happened at all since boarding began.

The parent also stated that the staff have been amazing, and specified the Head of Care as a key contact. There are always very strong updates provided, and the parent feels that there is a very strong sense of staff truly caring about the boarders. The parent also stated that she feels that the Head of Care (and other deaf staff) have been very strong role models for the boarders as a demonstration of the fact that deafness does not have to be a barrier to aspiration. The parent explained that one moment of concern had been overcome a while ago, related to a handover process between the school and the residential setup when there was confusion. This has been moved past, and the parent stated that she could not be happier with the support from the Residential Service and that it has been extremely helpful as a means to support real life experiences and build towards the supported living that is now taking place. This consultation has been a very strong endorsement of the power of the Residential Service to transform lives.

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

**Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision**

This visit was a another very positive validation of the strength of the care in place within the Residential Service at Oak Lodge, and saw me reflect alongside the Head of Care that the relentless pursuit of the highest of standards is a default setting for the Head of Care, and the other staff.

The care noted in this visit remains as strong as I have come to expect in my visits and I am particularly looking forward to supporting the Head of Care as he reflects the quality against other services into term 6. I thank everyone for their ongoing warm welcome and I look forward to my next visit in term 6.

**Name:** Mark Goode                      **Date:** 24.04.26

| RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT   |  |                          |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Actions  | Comments from Provider   | Expected Completion Date |
| <p><b><u>Paperwork Preparation for Term 6 Visit</u></b><br/>For the Head of Care to press on and have the following documents prepared for perusal in the course of my next visit in term 6 if possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Updated Residential Improvement Plan.</li> <li>- Comparison Document (set against other provisions).</li> </ul> <p><b><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The effectiveness of leaders and managers.</u></b><br/>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>Leaders and managers lead by example, innovate and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest quality care for children.</p> | <p>Comparison report from 4 visits to other residential provisions will be completed after 4<sup>th</sup> visit early June. Then Improvement Plan will also be updated</p> | <p>End of June 2026</p>  |
| <p><b><u>Innovative QR Codes proposal.</u></b><br/>For the Head of Care to push ahead with the plan to add QR codes to display around the Residential Service as a means to help communication.</p> <p><b><u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The overall experiences and progress of children</u></b><br/>There is significant evidence of change and improvement for children because of the actions of the staff working at the school.</p>  | <p>Will make a start during May and aim to have QR codes put up in Residential by Term 6 visit.</p>  | <p>Term 6</p>            |
| Head of Residential's Comments   |  |                          |
| <p>This is a pleasing report to read with feedback on the new Life Skills report presented during Term 5 visit, along with feedback from the Independent Listener's visit and report. The feedback from a parent is also inspiring to read with our service supporting to improve his communication and 'transforming lives' which highlights our vision. I will look forward to Term 6 visit.</p>   |  |                          |
| <p><b>Name: Saul Allison</b></p>   |  |                          |
| <p><b>Date: 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026</b></p>   |  |                          |

| Head Teachers' Comments  |
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| <p>Well done to the residential team for consistently creating a positive environment for our young people - thank you Mark for capturing this work and parental feedback. It is reassuring to hear that the Life Skills programme is embedding well into routine practice and we now need to focus on capturing progress and outcomes. Our Independent Listener report provides excellent pupil voice feedback for the service to consider.</p> |
| <p><b>Name: Caroline Rowlandson</b></p>  |
| <p><b>Date: 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026</b></p>  |

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

Thank you Saul and the whole residential team for your continued hard work, care and commitment to our boarders. It's very encouraging to see the positive impact of the evolving Life Skills programme, the new reward system and the creative approaches being taken to strengthen pupil voice and communication across the residential provision. We're pleased to see the continued focus on improvement and innovation, including the planned QR code initiative and the comparative review work with other residential settings. The positive feedback from parents, the Independent Listener and Mark's observations throughout this report are a real reflection of the dedication, professionalism and compassion shown by the team every day, and the meaningful impact this has on our young people and families.

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

**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2026**