



Standard 3 Visit

Name of Service	Oak Lodge School
Date of previous visit	21/04/2026
Date of this visit	24/06/2026
Standard 3 Visitor	Mark Goode
Time of visit	15.00 – 17.30
Visit Supported by	Head of Care – Saul Allison

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 5th 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 fourth week of the final half term of the school year on a Wednesday afternoon, and upon arrival I was greeted by the Headteacher, then by the Head of Care, whereupon I undertook an extensive consultation, and reviewed all mandatory aspects required of a Standard 3 visit once again. There was also a thematic discussion surrounding the Residential Service and preparation for the OFSTED Inspection that is set to happen around September/October 2026. The Head of Care explained that there have been no new boarders begin attending since my last visit in term 5, but that one is set to undergo a trial visit during the day after my visit. This is ahead of the start date for this boarder in September as a new year 7. There are 3 new boarders set to join the school as year 7s in September and the beginnings of preparation are taking place for their paperwork and risk assessment. No boarders have stopped boarding since the point of my last visit in term 5. The Head of Care also explained that the 2 morning staff that had begun around the time of my last visit in term 5 have bedded in well and been very helpful. I followed up on the recommendations that I made in the last visit and we discussed the current status of boarders and the service generally. This visit took place in a period of extreme heatwave and when the London area was under a 'Red Weather Warning'. As such activities had been adjusted and some boarders had preferred to go home. Prior to departing, I undertook a brief consultation with the Headteacher that is included in the thematic area. 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/ Verification by Independent Visitor in next visit
Paperwork Preparation for Term 6 Visit: 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: Updated Residential Improvement & Comparison Document.	These documents were discussed and covered as part of the discussions below.
Innovative QR Codes proposal: 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.	I was provided with an update regarding this and the details are contained in the consultations section below.

How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.

During this visit the Head of Care explained that there has been one area of concern and action taken related to a boarder that has seen behaviour of concern towards themselves requiring management. The Head of Care explained the events and the way the school has responded to support the boarder, as well as others that were around the incident at the time. There has been contact and suitably urgent appointments undertaken that have led to very well-measured support being brought to bear, with the support of the school SEN Lead, DSL and external support services. The boarder has been at home whilst a safety plan has been conceived and the work to re-integrate the boarder using this, and suitably judged risk assessments for the safety of all is underway. It is my view that all steps that can be taken have been and that as a result, there are no concerns that relate to safeguarding processes as a result of this visit. I will look to review the effectiveness of all strategies and gauge the situation when I return in the first term of next academic year.

Mandatory Areas

Topic	Comments
Records of attendance/ exclusion/ missing episodes 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 5. The information shared showed that attendance remains strong with an overall attendance figure since my last visit in term 5 at an average of 90%. This includes three boarders with significantly lower attendance that represent some specific issues. When these two are disappplied the overall average for the others stands at close to 96%. The impact of Residential on attendance remains a positive feature that supports learning.
Complaints 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 5. This overall positive reflection is further validated by the way the Independent Listener has supported feedback from all residents.
Sanctions/Consequences 20.6	During this visit the Head of Care explained that, other than the event covered in the safeguarding section, there is one consequence being applied for one boarder presently. The behaviour of concern has been towards other boarders and the action being taken was explained to me by the Head of Care. It is my view that the proposed action is both suitable and potentially likely to have a positive impact. I offered some suggestions that the Head of Care is considering. I agreed to review the impact in the next visit that I undertake.
Restraint/Safe Hold (including restrictive interventions) 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 5. The details above that were shared illustrate how the bespoke consideration given to the boarders' needs and actions is always well-considered in my view. The staff use skill and finely tuned judgement to manage events carefully and this helps to prevent restraints in my view.
Risk Assessments Appendix B (11,16)	This visit saw the Head of Care share the fact that all Care Plans, Risk Assessments and Positive Behaviour Plans were fully reviewed in the period just before the ½ term break and are all up to date. The audit system works well and the staff are in the middle of writing reports for the end of the school year. These include the impact of the life skills programme and general progress that has been made. The Head of Care explained that he has transferred a number of the placement plans to the newest format and that the completion of this will be taking place ahead of the end of the school year. It was also clear that meeting with parents at parents' evening recently saw very positive feedback given and is helping with care planning. Advance preparations are being made to see plans created for the incoming cohort for September. Along with the agreed outputs from the thematic area below, I agreed to review a fresh sample of these new plans when I return into term 1 of next academic year.
Placement Plans 7.2	

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 continued to be used and is now a fuller picture that is being used to complete reports for the end of the school year. The 'star' based reward system has also been moved forward in support of this process.

The displays, and the general good condition that is evident in the boarding space is a testament to the staff team and supports boarders well.

The Head of Care also shared the fact that he has been involved in a planning exercise that is seeing the new school developed by architects and he has been in the vanguard of planning the residential area. There is more detail related to this in the consultations section below.

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 below, as well as the ground covered in the thematic review section:

Residential Development Plan:

This has continued to be worked upon after a review that took place in the period just after my last visit, and the Head of Care explained that this is due to be finished again before the end of the school year. He expressed the wish to develop a new one into the next academic year to reflect continued renewal and a focus on constantly challenging the service to question itself in the name of serving the boarders' interests as they change over time. This is commendable in my view. I agreed to support the process when I next return.

Life Skills Programme and Rewards Charts:

As stated higher in this report, the Life Skills Programme and associated rewards system has continued to develop and boarders have been working on a number of skills that are set to be reviewed and reported upon in the end of school year reports that staff are currently producing. This will contain some collective achievements and personalised reporting. A clear deadline is in place of the 10th July and this will enable a refresh and re-set for September.

QR Codes' Process Status

This has moved forward and there have been a range of words produced to be used in this system including: 'Activities', 'Dinner/Dinner Menu', 'Key Worker' and 'Safeguarding'. The aim is to flesh this out further by the time of the next visit of the Independent Listener as it was based on a suggestion from them.

Comparison Document

Between the last visit and this one I received a document from the Head of Care that has drawn together reflections and learning after visits to 4 Residential Services of comparative scope (for Deaf Students, and others). The document illustrates how the Head of Care has been extremely focussed upon growing his own experience and wished to use the experience to verify the quality of the processes at Oak Lodge, share any practice that was felt to be strong by other providers, and gather ideas to evolve the service further. Given that this process has taken place around the time of the most recent OFSTED Inspection in itself speaks volumes of the determination to grow and go beyond the experiences that the service has. This is a sign that complacency is

simply not a feature at Oak Lodge and building upon a judgement of outstanding in all areas illustrated determination never to rest on any laurels at all.

The document itself is very comprehensive and reflective, and sees strong learning taking place. The Head of Care and I discussed this in the light of the coming inspection and I encouraged him to use it as a launchpad for the next phase of learning, self-evaluation and improvement planning that he is set to take part in next. I was very impressed with his willingness to take on board fresh ideas and plough them into the current service, as well as the planning for the new school development that has begun.

Time Spent in the Residential Space alongside Staff and boarders

This visit took place during an evening of extremely high temperatures and as such activity was limited. Some boarders were playing a computer game on a big screen but others were generally relaxing and trying to stay cool. I greeted and was welcomed by a number of boarders and they seemed content, but it was also clear that several had gone home owing to the temperature. I had no concerns with what I observed in any way as the main activity took place in the coolest part of the school which was most sensible.

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 parents of two boarders that are attending boarding to gather their views on the service and their responses were as follows:

- The first explained that her daughter has been at the school for close to 5 years and boarding for the duration as well.
- The school was allocated after a period in a more local special provider with a small deaf unit but the provision was not meeting her daughter's needs as well as they could have and the boarder wanted to be with Deaf Peers.
- The parent explained that priority areas for support were taking responsibility for personal care and independence skills and that the support has been amazing in the time that boarding has been in place. The boarder has demonstrated a vast improvement in managing personal care, has improved social skills, engages with clubs and has made a lot of friends in the deaf community. It has essentially opened the world up to her in a very real sense.
- The parent expressed no concerns at all related to Residential support and stated that the school have been extremely supportive in dialogue with the local authority as well.

- The second parent explained that boarding has been a recent thing (September 2025 onwards), and has had a truncated span owing to quite a serious accident that took place in the school day. This saw boarding paused for a while.
- That having been said, the parent reflected that there have been impacts of boarding in that the boarder's signing has improved, and whilst trips have been tricky to navigate since the accident, there is very good communication in place within the residential service and this is seeing the boarder's confidence increasing once again.
- It is hoped that September will see a rise again in the impact of boarding.
- The parent also had no concerns about boarding, which she stated was very encouraging given the events she described.

The feedback received here illustrates the impact that boarding has for the lives of the boarders and families and it is greatly appreciated.

Thematic Areas	
Standard/SCCIF Reference	Evidence / Observation
	<u>Support towards consideration of preparations ahead of OFSTED Inspection (probable to be in October 2026).</u> The discussion with the Head of Care began with the starting point that the last Inspection saw a judgement of Outstanding in all areas with one recommendation related to staff training being facilitated. I began by asking about evidence of processes and systems evolving and where it is all held. The Head of Care and I then covered the evidence base as follows: (1) There is a tracking log of all training for Staff undertaking formal qualifications that can be shared as evidence (2) Staff that work across the school and Residential (but are not studying formal qualifications) have a new system for supervision that is identifying training needs. (3) There is the comparison document that contains much evidence of reflection upon the quality of the support in place, and how it can be enhanced. (4) The recent QR code process is another innovative piece of evidence to use and reflect upon. (5) The NMS annual review is set to take place before the end of the school year. (6) The Residential Development Plan is set to be updated in line with the NMS review. (7) The Head of Care has a SCCIF audit that he plans to update as well. The Head of Care stated that he has the intention to complete all of the above (which are all partially done) and ensure that the storage area for everything is easy to access and updated ready for the next inspection. We then moved on to the SCCIF and discussed the statements in the Outstanding area for each of the three main strands. It is my view that much of the work listed above, and general practice at Oak Lodge, fits into many of these areas and that some initiatives cover more than one. The Head of Care and I discussed initiatives such as the Comparison Document, the Life Skills Programme, as well as strategies for individual behaviour support and safeguarding that we discuss each time I visit as being sources of extremely strong evidence as well. The following points and suggestions were made for the Head of Care to include and act upon: (1) Make sure the NMS review is done ahead of the SCCIF audit being updated. (2) Ensure that the SCCIF review of the 'Outstanding Areas' reflects all aspects that are current and recent, especially related to the innovation that has been shown. I would also suggest the capturing of boarders' voice is included. (3) Involve the other leaders in the service in the review process as a means to developing their confidence and sharing the work around. (4) Ensure that the response to the stated area for development in the last inspection is made clear.

	(5) Consider the fact that some areas of the work that have been implemented can be used as evidence for several areas of the SCCIF. (6) Be confident that the care plans and bespoke work done for boarders are examples of work that is high quality – case studies exist for every boarder based on my experiences of what has been shared with me over time. Finally, I would advocate that the leaders of the service are themselves a great source of passion and the drivers of the service. I believe that the vision you project as a team is that you wish the boarders to aspire to succeed, and that nothing is beyond them. Your very presence as a team of deaf staff and high level role models means that – to quote the SCCIF - it is my view that you are: “inspirational, confident and ambitious for children and influential in changing the lives of those in your care”. Therefore, I finally advocate that you: (7) Ensure that the evidence that underpins the review you place in the SCCIF audit and NMS review is accessible and clear – then shared with the Inspectors on arrival.
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Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision

This visit was an opportunity to support the leaders at Oak Lodge in reviewing where they feel they sit against the likely inspection process, and it is my view that things have moved forward in a number of ways since the last Inspection, which itself was Outstanding in all areas. The care that I noted in this visit, as well as the passion and vision over time means that I see high standards and hope that the coming weeks and months can see this made overt and clear for when the inspection takes place. Essentially, I feel that a marshalling exercise that aligns judgements with evidence available is needed.

I wish everyone well, and thank all for the warm welcome I always receive. I hope that all have a decent summer break and I look forward to supporting you all into 2026-27.

Name: Mark Goode

Date: 25.06.26

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT

Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<u>Thematic Review Suggestions</u> To consider the detail of our discussion and the suggestions made, and take action to evolve the evidence base and review processes for when OFSTED are due to arrive in September/October. <u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The effectiveness of Leaders and Managers,</u> Leaders and managers lead by example, innovate and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest quality care for children & Leaders and managers know their strengths and weaknesses well and can provide evidence of improvement over a sustained period.	All of these will be reviewed in the next couple of weeks before end of year, and to prepare with the Residential team during INSET days on our return in September.	September 2026

<u>Safeguarding and Behaviour Actions</u> To continue the support explained to me and update me upon the impact into the next term when I next visit. <u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria) How Children are Helped and Protected,</u> Proactive and creative safeguarding practice means that all children, including the most vulnerable, have a strong sense of safety and wellbeing and they are unlikely to be missing from the school on a regular basis. Children are involved in creating ways to de-escalate situations and finding creative alternative strategies that are effective.		
Head of Residential's Comments		
Thank you for the visit and an encouraging interaction during the visit to discuss both the SCIFF and NMS reviews covering preparation for OFSTED visit next term. The points raised in the Thematic areas in this report have been noted and will be covered among the Residential staff preparation during our INSET days in September. Thank you Mark for your valuable ongoing support across this year.		
Name: Saul Allison		
Date: 02/07/2026		
Head Teachers' Comments		
Well done to the team for concluding the year on a very positive note. The focus is correctly identified in preparation for the next academic year and reviewing successes gained in the NMS & SCIFF and areas to work on next year. The team deserve a well-earned break during the summer and thank you to Louise as Governor all these years who has witnessed the improvement over time.		
Name: Caroline Rowlandson		
Date: 14.07.2026		
Formal Response from the Governing Body, Trustees, or proprietor of the school		
Thank you, Saul and the residential team, for your continued dedication, care and commitment to our boarders. It is very encouraging to see the continued development of the Life Skills programme, reward system and QR code initiative, alongside the team's strong focus on continuous improvement and preparation for the forthcoming Ofsted inspection. The comparative review of other residential settings demonstrates a clear commitment to learning, innovation and maintaining the highest standards of care. We are particularly pleased to see the consistently positive feedback from parents, who describe the significant impact boarding is having on young people's independence, confidence, communication skills and social development. It is also reassuring to see the strength of safeguarding practice, positive attendance outcomes and the thoughtful support provided to young people and their families. Mark's observations throughout the report reflect a residential provision that remains ambitious, reflective and focused on achieving the very best outcomes for its boarders. We thank the team for their professionalism, passion and dedication, and look forward to seeing the service continue to develop and thrive in the year ahead.		
Name: Louisa Steensma Williamson and Helen Whitmore, Co-Link Governors		
Date: 06/07/2026		