PLATINUM CARE
CONSULTANCY LTD

Standard 3 Visit

Name of Service	**Oak Lodge School**
Date of previous visit	**24/06/2026**
Date of this visit	**16/09/2026**
Standard 3 Visitor	**Mark Goode**
Time of visit	**14.30 – 16.30**
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 third week of the first half term of the school year on a Wednesday afternoon, and upon arrival I was greeted by the Headteacher, and soon after joined by the Head of Care, whereupon I undertook a consultation with each, and reviewed all mandatory aspects required of a Standard 3 visit. I followed up upon the changes that have taken place across the summer and we discussed the use of the outcomes of the thematic support that I had shared in the most recent visit before the Summer break. There is a currently anticipation related to the likely imminent OFSTED Inspection that is set to happen by mid October 2026. The Head of Care explained that there have been significant numbers of new boarders join the service since I last visited, with 8 joining, and others set to join soon. This takes the service to capacity based on what was shared with me. Work related to paperwork (care plans and risk assessments) is currently a clear focus and I supported the Head of Care in this regard during this visit. 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. All of these elements are included below.

Areas requiring action from previous visit	
Action Point from Previous Visit	**Provider's Response/ Verification by Independent Visitor in next visit**
<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>Provider's Response</u>** 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. **<u>Reflection after this visit</u>** The Head of Care and Headteacher explained that the areas that I gave support on in the last visit of 2025-26 are set to see all paperwork updated in the coming days and weeks. I reinforced the priorities related to the coming inspection from my perspective and I will look to continue this support into my next visit.

Safeguarding and Behaviour Actions	**Reflection after this visit**
To continue the support explained to me and update me upon the impact into the next term when I next visit.	The Head of Care explained that the resident that had been the subject of support after incidents has been supported across the summer and reintegration into school has taken place. I have more fully evaluated this in the Safeguarding section below.

How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.

During this visit the Head of Care explained that there have been no fresh concerns that have seen support required since the last visit that I undertook in the Summer term. The boarder that had been at home and supported by a safety plan has seen support provided across the Summer and it is clear that a medication change has seen the resident's demeanour changed. There has been reintegration into school and a general upturn in both mood and response to staff and other residents as a result. There has been one event related to relationships with other residents that is covered below in the mandatory section, but it has been managed effectively and support given to see reflection that has been reasonable. I have no concerns related to safeguarding after this visit.

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 6 of 2025-26. The information shared showed that attendance remains strong with an overall attendance figure since my last visit in term 5 at an average of 86.7%. The impact of Residential on attendance remains a positive feature that supports learning, and this figure includes boarders as they are beginning the school year, when any absences can disproportionately impact the overall statistics..
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 6.
Sanctions/Consequences 20.6	During this visit the Head of Care explained that, other than the event covered in the section below, there has been a positive period of settling since the new term started. As such there have been no formal sanctions required. The increased numbers have seen greater levels of socialisation between boarders, and an energy that has seen negotiation and a growth in the vibrancy in the boarding service. I have commented further on this in the section below related to spending time with the boarders.
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 has been one incident of a disagreement between two boarders that resulted in a preventative restraint when it threatened to become physical between them. I scrutinised the recorded details of the event and view the record keeping as detailed and comprehensive. The reflection of a boarder that the intervention was needed and helped them to calm quickly was shared and I reinforced the usefulness of making sure this is included in detail in the records of the event.
Risk Assessments Appendix B (11,16)	This visit saw the Head of Care share the fact that the recent spike in referrals into the service has seen significant work being undertaken to ensure that all needs are being met. Plans have been received for all new boarders, and the leaders of the service are in the process of assigning key workers and reviewing all shared information related to needs and known risks. This process involves working in a collaborative fashion with parents, teachers in school, and comparing what is evident in the behaviour and presentation of each boarder with information received. This process is methodical and detailed, as it needs to be. The Head of Care and Deputy both shared the fact that all known risks are being supported and that staff are getting to know boarders, and reflecting upon the settling process at the same time for each boarder. I have no concerns related to this process having spent time in the service and supported the Head
Placement Plans 7.2	

	of Care related to how he is set to see the plans completed, shared and then reviewed in line with the NMS.

Suitability of the building, furnishings & external environment.

This visit saw me tour the service and I noted that the visual displays are being re-worked to reflect the new cohort and I noted these being used by staff with boarders in the visit. They are clearly still settling in to processes and the visual nature of the information is useful. The leaders explained that there has been ongoing maintenance carried out across the Summer Holiday and the Residential space remains suitably decorated and well set up for the boarders' needs. The buildings and contents remain a well organised and homely space.

The Headteacher and I also discussed the developments that have taken place related to the coming rebuilding of the school, and the timescale for this in terms of the likely impact upon the Residential Service. I have detailed these discussions 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 Headteacher

At the start of this visit I met briefly with the Headteacher and she explained the current context of the school and the Residential Service. She explained the fact that a large number of new starters had commenced boarding and that more were due to have starts in the coming days – with specialist support and training needed for staff related to one in particular. The paperwork for some was still being completed and care was being taken to ensure that all needs are fully met by the staff. The Headteacher shared the fact that new targets for the academic year have been created by the Head of Care and approved. I went on to discuss these with the Head of Care as detailed below.

The summer break had seen some maintenance issues taken care of including refreshing of some areas but this was being balanced against the coming rebuild processes. This was explained as seeing the school rebuilt in its entirety by the DFE on its current footprint and that, whilst this was taking place over a 2-year period from the Summer of 2027, the school will be relocating to one of two sites in the Wandsworth area. The Residential Service is set to be relocated more locally, into a premises that overlooks the current site on Nightingale Lane. The site itself has two floors that seem set to be allocated to the service, and whilst there is sense that it will require significant modernisation, it seems likely that it will be very able to support the service well. It has 48 rooms, with its own kitchen and all rooms have en-suite bathrooms. There is a great deal of flexibility in the space and access to outdoor spaces as well. The Headteacher explained that timescales and exact arrangements are yet to be established but some form of transition process involving the boarders is set to take place once all arrangements for health and safety, maintenance and security are discussed. I agreed to play a supportive role when the time comes around and I agreed that seeing the boarders have involvement in this process of transition, as well as the subsequent move back into the new school building will be valuable.

Following the visit, I returned to the Headteacher and expressed my views on what I had witnessed, especially related to the vibrant energy and increased amount of socialisation that I observed in the visit (as captured elsewhere in this report.

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:

Start to the school year: It was made clear that the early stages of the year have seen unexpected numbers of boarders join the service, and that staff have found this challenging to a degree. That having been said, the

feedback also stated that through a team effort, the staff have been pulling together and that it was felt that following recent recruitment, capacity to manage all work is in place once the staff start work. It was clear that there has been a good deal of ground to cover between Residential and School staff, parents, use of EHCPs and planning documents that have been shared as boarders have joined the school, in order to make sure all are safe and needs are understood. During the visit I noted conferring between the Head of Care and Headteacher/SENCO/Admissions Lead over the nature of the cohort and it is clear that ensuring the staff capacity is considered when reviewing the numbers and nature of the boarding provision and that staff collaboration is an ongoing feature of this work that centres around the service meeting needs as fully as possible.

Paperwork processes have been supported by trawls of information, and face-face meetings. Staff training is being sourced for some aspects of the projected care needs and the relevant boarder is set to begin boarding when this is done. This is sensible in my view. The Head of Care went on to explain that he is confident that all key needs and risks are fully understood. Key workers have been allocated and he is set to pass on the devising of the final care plans to other staff imminently. This will then enable him to quality assure this process when complete, and turn his focus to the wider development planning in that period.

Residential Development Plan: This is being populated with new targets that have been agreed with the Headteacher. I reviewed these as part of the visit and it is my view that they contain a balance of priorities that see regular review against the SCCIF and NMS structures, maintaining support for all boarders in line with their changing needs, have a focus on relevant and personalised life skills priorities, help to develop staff skillsets, and ensure that the temporary move of the service will be well supported. I agreed to support the process when I next return and reinforced the importance of using the feedback from my last visit as a means to illustrate the high quality present in so many areas of the service that I see when the inspection takes place.

Life Skills Programme and Rewards Charts: It was explained that the Deputy Head of Care has redesigned and re-focussed the targets into different areas for different groups of boarders. I have covered the detail below when I discuss my consultation with him.

QR Codes' Process Status: The Head of Care reported that this has moved forward positively with 5 QR codes being represented downstairs and explained that this week has seen the staff team suggesting 2 more – 'Diversity' and 'Technology Agreement'. I will look to capture developments in this area as time passes.

Comparison Document: The Head of Care explained that this has now been shared with Governors – and has seen a positive response with some areas of feedback leading to suggestions related to the new building as it develops. I suggested that, once time permits, these adjustments and the entire document should be considered and shared with OFSTED as it represents strong work in my view.

Consultation with the Deputy Head of Care

I spent time talking with the Deputy Head of Care in the course of this visit, and he explained that the start to the year has been extremely busy and that there have been some concerns over making sure all aspects are covered properly when admitting new boarders, recruiting new staff, and making sure all work is covered. This reflected a desire to make sure the standards that have been achieved in the service are maintained as the imminent OFSTED Inspection approaches. He agreed that high numbers is certainly a better situation to be facing than lowering numbers, and stated that recent recruitment efforts, and allocation of training have made him feel that the staff are feeling more in control.

The updating of the life skills programme was covered and he explained that the targeted areas have evolved to see two separate groups working on different skills as the year begins:

- The first is comprised of new boarders and those that have yet to complete the full range of basic skills. Their focus will be on the skills that were described as day to day elements (bed making, basic cooking, laundry etc).
- The second are a dedicated group that are closing in on leaving the service (and the school) and they will be focussed upon more advanced skills, having mastered those being covered by the first group. These skills include baking, benefits, managing bills, travel training, requesting support to help navigate society and other skills akin to self-advocacy.

He went on to explain that reports are produced 6 times a year and I agreed to review the emerging outcomes when I next visit in term 2. He also stated that he feels listened to when he has raised concerns over staff capacity, but that he still feels there is a lot to do.

Time spent in discussion with a selection of boarders and in the service alongside Staff and boarders

As this was the first visit of the academic year, and there are a lot of new faces, I spent much of my time observing and meeting/greeting new and continuing boarders as they settled into their evening. The Head of Care explained that a recent development has been that, after a brief period when phones are given to boarders, they have all agreed to hand them in and engage with each other and activities for a prolonged period. I noted this happening and interactions were all over the residential area between different groups. Some introduced themselves to me (mainly the newer boarders) out of curiosity over who I was, and others simply chatted with each other and staff, or played games and relaxed in the various seating areas. The vibrancy of the interactions was evident and represents a gear shift from previous visits in my view. It is clear that the development has been boarder driven and I also noted the fact that the various displays related to meals and activities were being explained to some boarders, and that life skills and achievements boards are moving toward representing the current boarders. I look forward to seeing these features developing as the year passes.

This visit also saw me meet with three boarders after offering this support and their reflections are as follows:

(1) The first was a continuing boarder who explained that he has now reached 18 years old and has two years left in the school/service. He feels that attending residential has helped him to make friends, and that he enjoys this aspect most. He has an interest in all things related to motorbikes and has enjoyed activities that relate to this. He also stated that he enjoys community time to a degree. We then discussed life skills work and he is aware that this year will see him working towards the self-advocacy and more advanced skills. This seems pertinent as he is not yet clear over his wishes for future work/college and will benefit from such support in expressing his wishes and exploring his options.

(2) The second was a recently arrived 17-year-old boarder that has just joined the school and was in the second week of boarding. He explained that he lives on a rural farm and that coming to a school in London takes quite a while. He is clearly acclimatising to the school and residential, but stated he most enjoys accessing help, playing games and making friends. He stated that he may choose to be a cleaner when he leaves school and is clearly very happy in the residential setup.

(3) The third was another recent starter in boarding, who shared the fact that she is 14 and has been in the school and residential for just over a week. She stated that starting has been exciting and that she has enjoyed making new friends, as well as it being easier to get to school by staying on site for the week. She enjoys card games and Art in particular and seems keen to work in this field in time.

All three boarders that I spoke with were well supported by the BSL translator that supported the consultation, and demonstrated great confidence and resilience in meeting with me.

Other Staff Support

During the course of this visit I spent time in the company of both boarders and staff whilst supportive conversations took place with other members of the school staff. On these occasions the staff in question were the Speech and Language Therapist, and the Head of Medical Support. These conversations related to specific boarders that have recently started attending the school/Residential Service and they illustrated the wraparound support that exists. Staff collaborate seamlessly and ensure that all support that can be given is in a way that ensures boarders are as well supported as can be, and respond to changing/emerging information as it develops.

Consultation with parents of recently arrived boarders

In the days that followed this visit I reached out to speak to the parents of three recently started boarders to gather their views on the service and I have been able to reach one in the time that has passed prior to completing this report. I have tried multiple times to reach the others unsuccessfully and will potentially look to speak to them in the course of term 2's visit instead. The parent that I have reached shared the following information as feedback:

- The boarder is now in year 10, and the support available at Oak Lodge is better suited to their needs.
- Transitions into and from school are being better supported by attending the residential service than their prior experience.
- The capacity to spend extended time with peers, and develop more advanced BSL skills is a crucial feature.
- The parent also fed back the fact that support has been 'amazing' so far, and the communication is responsive, polite and timely from the staff in residential.
- Finally, the fact that the staff team are terrific role models was focussed upon by the parent as a very important feature of the work that is taking place.

Overall the feedback was extremely positive and reflects a very strong start to boarding for this resident and family.

Thematic Areas	
Standard/SCCIF Reference	**Evidence / Observation**
	None undertaken in this visit. The use of the thematic review undertaken last time to support the preparation for OFSTED is set to take place in the coming weeks and I reinforced the priorities that I feel will help most in this work as part of this visit.

Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision
This visit took place at an early stage in the school year, and the energy present in the Residential Service was palpable. There is a needed focus upon ensuring all paperwork and systems for the newest boarders are undertaken in a watertight fashion, and I have no concerns over the staff's intentions and focus as a result of this visit. The care that I noted in this visit, as well as the passion and vision for the coming year was clear and reflects a determination to showcase the very best of the work that takes place at Oak Lodge when the coming inspection takes place. The leaders are doing all that they can to support all staff and boarders as fully as possible. I look forward to supporting this process across the rest of the year.
Name: Mark Goode **Date:** 22/09/2026

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT		
Actions	**Comments from Provider**	**Expected Completion Date**
<u>Record Keeping after Restraints or similar</u> It was suggested that including the calm reflections of those involved in incidents can illustrate the impact and usefulness of the interventions. The case in question was discussed with the Head of Care and he stated his intention to update the records accordingly. This is wise in my view. **<u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The overall experiences and progress of children</u>** 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.	This has been updated since the visit, stating a positive feedback provided from the student intervened. This is recorded on the Restorative session on our ACP system. We will continue to work with the students, especially the new students, and adapt where necessary to meet their needs.	Immediate and Ongoing
<u>Use of Feedback from last term's thematic review</u> It would be wise to ensure that the necessary focus upon integrating new boarders and making sure all paperwork is in place is concluded asap, and then for the key priorities that emerged from my thematic review in term 6 of 2025-26 to be processed. This is designed to help the service showcase itself most effectively when OFSTED return. The Head of Care considering delegation of aspects of daily operations to support him in preparing development plans/audits may help this process in my view. I am also happy to support this process into my next visit. **<u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The effectiveness of leaders and managers</u>** Leaders and managers know their strengths and weaknesses well and can provide evidence of improvement over a sustained period.	This is actioned upon to the team with the delegation of paperwork tasks. Deadline has been given to ensure these new paperwork is created and recorded on our ACP system.	Term 2 2026-27
Head of Residential's Comments		
Thank you Mark for his visit soon after we started the new academic year welcoming the students back especially the new boarders at Phoenix House. It has been very busy start to the year and while OFSTED preparation has started during Term 6 in the previous summer term, I appreciate Mark's input in this report to ensure all areas of paperwork is covered ready for upcoming OFSTED inspection this term. I will look forward to Mark's next visit in Term 2.		
Name: Saul Allison		
Date: 29th September 2026		

Head Teachers' Comments
Thank you for your report outlining all the hard work that the team have been doing and providing a clear focus for the team to be developing in the term ahead. It is reassuring to see the reflections from staff on supporting new pupils to residential and recognition of further developments yet to be implemented to further improve the service. Pupils reports reinforced the general ethos of the provision and the new pupils are becoming used to the routines away from home.
Name: Caroline Rowlandson
Date: 06.10.2026

Formal Response from the Governing Body, Trustees, or proprietor of the school
Thank you to Mark for his report and to Saul and the residential team for their continued care and commitment during a particularly busy start to the year. I recognise the additional demands of welcoming a larger group of new boarders and appreciate the work being done to understand their individual needs and help them settle. It is encouraging to read about the positive interactions between students, their involvement in agreeing time away from phones, and the friendships developing within Residential. The feedback from students and the parent consulted is particularly welcome, as is the continued development of the Life Skills programme to support both everyday independence and preparation for life beyond school. I note Mark's positive assessment of safeguarding during the visit and welcome confirmation that, following Marks' recommendation, the incident record now includes the student's own feedback on how the intervention helped them. I also support his recommendation to complete and quality assure documentation for new boarders promptly, alongside taking forward the priorities from the previous thematic review. I will follow up on progress, including staffing capacity and training, to ensure the team has the support needed to maintain the quality of care as the provision grows. Thank you again to Saul and the team for their hard work, and to Mark for his continued support and constructive feedback.
Name: Helen Whitmore, Co-Link Governor
Date: 4th October 2026