

# Linden Lodge School

Linden Lodge School, 61 Princes Way, LONDON, SW19 6JB

<b>Inspection dates</b>	19/03/2014 to 21/03/2014	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>51</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is outstanding because

- The school benefits from the support and guidance of highly committed and skilled governors and a visionary Principal.
- Safeguarding and child protection is highly developed in the school providing a safe nurturing environment for pupils.
- The pupils benefit from a coordinated approach to their care blending, education, therapeutic services, health and residential care. Parents and social workers note the positive impact this has on the development of the pupils.
- Pupils engage in a wide range of activities which present them with opportunities to learn and develop their interests and abilities. Staff use risk assessments creatively expanding pupils horizons in a safe but challenging way. Pupils practice decision making and friendship forming in a warm caring environment.
- The school is a safe and life enhancing environment. It has excellent recruitment and training practice, ensuring pupils are cared for by suitably experienced and well qualified staff. Care is provided in a fantastically resourced and safe environment with regular, comprehensive and rigorous health and safety standards.

### Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

## Information about this inspection

The school were notified of the inspection at 10:00 on 19 March 2014 and at 13:00, the Social Care Regulatory Inspector met with key staff including: the Principal, the Chair of the Governing body and Deputy Head of boarding. During the inspection meetings occurred with: boarders, residential staff, parent governors, governors, independent visitor and those with responsibility for safeguarding, health and safety, catering, therapy, administration of medication and administration of recruitment records. Telephone or email contact was made with parents, social workers and the local safeguarding team. Relevant records were scrutinised including: point in time surveys, Parent View, medication; recruitment records, staff records, the single central record; all relevant policies and procedures.

## Inspection team

Angus Mackay

Lead social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

This specialist residential school provides boarding and education for children with a wide range of visual impairment and other very complex needs. These needs include, deaf-blind multi sensory impairment, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties, multi disabled visually impaired. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. This is a maintained school which provides weekly or part-time residential accommodation for pupils in three residential units, on separate floors, in one building. During the period of inspection 46 residential pupils used the resource.

The school is located in south west London and is easily accessible by public transport. The residential provision in the school was previously inspected in October 2012.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- revise the training policy and construct a clear training matrix including training expectations for all staff. Training to include managing self harming behaviour and assertion.
- minimise the risk to pupils by no longer accepting those whose needs are beyond the school's current funding resources and expertise unless meaningful additional support is provided.
- revise the safeguarding policy to include actions to take when allegations are made about a member of staff.
- record restraints in a numbered log book or in an on-line encrypted system.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Pupils are relaxed and comfortable with staff. One social worker commented, 'Whenever I visit him at Linden Lodge, I observe that he appears happy and relaxed. He has formed very strong relationships with his 1:1 carers and this is evidenced by smiles, happy vocalisations and laughing when they greet him.'

Pupils have good attendance at school and good educational achievement. Pupils say that they think being in boarding helps them to achieve in school. Pupils enjoy the residential experience one saying, 'Residential is really good, it is brilliant.' They say they feel safe in boarding and that there is no bullying. Pupils say that they can have their rooms as they like them but must check with staff if they want to move things due to other pupil's mobility and vision issues. Pupils have a safe nurturing base which aids their achievement and attendance at school.

Pupils take on responsibilities according to their capabilities. Pupils learn independence skills and enjoy their contribution to the unit and to their friends. For example one pupil enjoys taking the food trolley downstairs after each meal. Others help to set the table or to clear up afterwards. The school has modified the kitchens so that pupils can help with washing up and cooking. Pupils are developing independence skills through this work.

Residential pupils recognise the small but significant steps they take. One pupil saying, 'I can feed myself now. When I came here first I needed staff to do that for me.' The therapeutic team work closely with residential staff, providing assistance with the development of independence skills in the pupils. Work done with pupils includes developing skills in eating, drinking, washing, dressing, shaving, preparing snacks and other self-help skills. The therapeutic team track improvements in the pupils varying targets as they are achieved and maintained. Pupils make significant progress in developing independence skills.

Young people make excellent progress with communication. Staff provide them with opportunities to practice and develop language skills. This varies from basic communication, requiring the use of aids, through to developing a second modern language in the language club. The therapy team ensure that there is good sharing of information between school and the residential units. One social worker commented, 'I feel that the consistency between the school and the residential provision is good, so the young person continues to work towards his IEP's in terms of communication, social interaction and self-care when he is in the residential unit. The same objects of reference are used across the school and residence which has helped in making steps towards improved communication.'

Pupils engage in a wide range of activities which they choose and sometimes organise. Recently pupils requested a visit from the fire brigade which they helped to plan and organise. Pupils have also submitted an application, to the local authority, for music equipment. This application requires them to go to a panel and answer questions. Pupils who are non-verbal are involved in this project and receive help from staff to present their answers. During the inspection one of the residential pupils had joined a skiing trip organised by the head of boarding. Pupils gain confidence in challenging situations outside the safe cocoon of the school through these interactions. They build self-esteem, confidence and the ability to present logical well thought out arguments.

Parents say that the major benefit of the residential experience is the development of friendships. Parents talked about the isolation their children experience, in the community, due to their disabilities. One parent said, 'The social side of the school is the most important for the children. They are able to develop friendships and learn social skills they cannot acquire anywhere else.'

Pupils also said that they enjoyed forming friendships in the residential setting. One pupil saying, 'It is good in boarding because you can see your friends from school. I go downstairs and see my friend.' Parents say that the residential experience is invaluable in preparing their children for being away from home. Transition planning is aided by visits from external colleges giving pupils and their parents the chance to plan moves away from the school.

## **Quality of residential provision and care**

## **Outstanding**

The quality of the school's residential provision is outstanding. Residential accommodation is modern, bright and excellently maintained. All areas of the school have pictures of staff, pupils and key people such as the governors and independent visitor. The residential accommodation is comfortable and decorated to aid pupil's movement and meet their personal preferences. Recent changes include modifications to kitchens in the residential homes enabling pupils to raise and lower work surfaces, making them accessible to all. Managers are sensitive to the individual needs of the pupils and modify the environment to make it more suitable for them. For example the small fish in the tank have been replaced with large highly coloured fish which more of the pupils can see.

Food is plentiful and nutritious. Pupils say they prefer the food in the residential setting describing it as, '...nice,' or '...yummy.' The school has healthy school status and a five star hygiene award. The catering team work closely with nutritionists and the speech and language therapist to provide appropriate food for all students. Pupils are given a choice at meal times and all cultural, health and religious needs are met. Fresh fruit is available at all times and pupils have ready access to water and other drinks. Pupils receive appropriate assistance with eating including modified plates, implements, residential staff assistance or medical support. Pupils enjoy pleasant healthy meals appropriate to their personal needs.

Pupils remain registered with their own medical practitioners. Medicines are controlled by the nurse who monitors the records ensuring pupils receive appropriate medication. The nurse provides excellent assistance and advice to the catering manager, residential staff the school and therapy teams supporting positive health programmes. However because of the complexities of funding, some extremely vulnerable referrals could be at risk as the schools resources can only provide limited medical support on site. There is only one school nurse and one assistant for the day school and no nurse cover at night. As a result, senior leaders and governors are rightly concerned that they may no longer be able to admit pupils with too great a level of need. Managers are using risk assessments appropriately to ensure they can safely met pupils complex health needs.

The therapy team are providing additional support to staff and pupils after school. The team are engaged with the pupils from referral onwards and provide a detailed assessment identifying how the specific needs of each pupil can be met. This will often identify additional resources including, staff, modifications to equipment, or the environment to enable the needs to be met. Therapists will also work with teachers and residential staff ensuring that everyone is working in the same way, on a 24 hour curriculum. For example this may involve using identical language in all settings or teaching life or self-help skills in the same way. Therapists aid pupils in improving the quality of their lives including: feeding, language, posture, sleeping, physical development, use of aids, mobility, communication, developing life skills and many other areas. The therapeutic team also work with the residential staff providing them with advice, guidance and training in working with the complex needs of the pupils. Therapists and residential staff are highly skilled at helping pupils to improve their social interactions.

Staff provide pupils with a fantastic range of activities designed to entertain and educate them. They make excellent use of the wonderful on site resources providing pupils with a wide choice of activities. These include trampolining, swimming, football, sensory stories, scouts and guides. In

addition staff take pupils to off-site activities which provide them with opportunities to socialise with other young people and members of the public and to develop skills in the use of money and public transport. Activities allow pupils to develop personally and to develop a sense of community and caring for others. One pupil said his favourite activity is cooking even though he cannot eat solid food.

Staff maintain excellent care plans which break down broad targets into smaller achievable short and long term targets. Recent modifications to the care plans provide staff with a more detailed approach to working with each pupil. Pupils and their parents agree the targets including how to meet religious and cultural needs. The care plan contains detailed information on all aspects of the pupil's abilities and needs. Pupils attend all of their reviews and aid staff in delivering PowerPoint presentations on their progress since the last review. Staff ensure that pupils can work the presentation with the use of aids where required. Care plans are highly personalised, well maintained and ensure staff meet the diverse needs of each pupil.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

### **Outstanding**

The school is outstanding in providing safe care for pupils. The school has a strong focus on the safety of pupils and on presenting them with an environment suited to their needs. Mobility about the site is excellently managed for all pupils, providing them with challenges suited to their personal learning programme. The buildings and walkways are designed to aid the mobility of all young people. The school has many creative innovations to signpost and direct pupils, such as objects of reference, use of colour and marked pathways. Risk assessments are comprehensive and used appropriately to broaden the boundaries and experiences of pupils. There have been no instances of pupils going missing since the last inspection and staff remain fully aware of the policy and procedure to keep pupils safe.

Health and safety measures are thorough, with all appropriate checks and maintenance in place. The school has recently completed an independent audit of its health and safety and was awarded the SafetyMARK of excellence. Site security is robust and provides a safe environment for pupils. Visitors to the school are appropriately supervised and resources are safely shared with the local community. Parents say that they are confident in the safe care of their children when they are in the residential setting. Following suggestions from the pupils, emergency services visited and engaged pupils in active sessions to address safety in the community, highlight the dangers of fire and to encourage their trust in police and fire services.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature had been investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the allegations were considered (where appropriate) alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors judgements.

The school has excellent links with the local authority safeguarding team and work closely with them to address any safeguarding issue. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) said, 'The school are always looking to improve their child protection work and are highly self-critical. They are always seeking to do things better.' Low level concerns are discussed with experts on the local authority disabilities team and prompt action taken to safeguard pupils. Staff training in safeguarding and child protection is excellent and all residential staff are appropriately trained annually. Child protection is included on the agenda at all governors meetings and all committees. Child protection and safeguarding policies are in line with local procedures. However, the safeguarding policy and procedures do not include details for dealing with allegations against staff as these are held in a separate, albeit readily available, document. Staff display excellent understanding of how to keep young people safe and how to meet their complex, and often highly personal care needs.

The school plan all placements carefully with parents, social workers and the individual pupil. The therapeutic team, work closely with the school and residential staff endeavouring to provide the guidance and modifications to equipment, environment or staff interventions to enable the most challenging pupils to engage and benefit from the school. The school pays good attention to staff training but some staff would benefit from further support in dealing with pupils who self-harm. Staff who work in the residential setting and in the classroom would also benefit from further training to aid working with challenging parents, carers and external agencies so that they are able to work fully cooperatively and flexibly together.

Staff recruitment is in line with national guidelines for safer recruitment in education. Records are excellently maintained and evidence good practice at interview and comprehensive vetting of staff. Governors are appropriately trained and demonstrate a clear understanding of the recruitment process. Pupil's safe care is enhanced by the thoroughness of the recruitment process.

There has been only one restraint since the last inspection and this was appropriately recorded. Information from the restraint was used to plan improvements to the care of the young person. Restraints are not recorded in a numbered log or on an encrypted date base.

The school has a well-publicised anti bullying programme which staff and pupils are familiar with. Pupils say that there is no bullying but it is constantly talked about in school assemblies, house meetings and by keyworkers. These measures enhance the safe care of the pupils.

### **Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding**

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. All senior staff value the impact the residential experience has on the pupils and ensure there is shared learning between the residential and educational staff. There is a powerful culture of continuous improvement shared by the dynamic senior team. Parents say of the Principal, 'He is immensely innovative and creative. I have never met anyone like him! His dedication to the school is immense and he is genuinely concerned about the staff as well as the pupils.' Governors are dynamic, engaged and highly supportive of the work of the school.

The school monitoring and evaluation systems are rigorous setting short and long term targets to improve the facilities and outcomes for pupils. The head of boarding is developing more detailed measurable outcomes for pupils to aid in the efficient use of resources. The monitoring is enhanced by the demanding reports provided by the independent visitor, including where relevant, comment on her contact with the students. The school has significant responsibility for managing the whole sensory service of the local authority providing excellent opportunities to manage transitions for students, from infancy to adulthood.

The school is a National Vocational Qualification assessment centre and recognises the crucial part training plays in the development of a staff team able to meet the complex needs of the students. Boarding staff complete comprehensive induction training enhanced by the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction leading to a suitable level 3 qualification. The school has excellent succession planning and most residential staff have suitable qualifications to level 4 or 5. Staff skills are enhanced by regular on-going training empowering them to meet the highly complex health, mobility and communication needs of the pupils. For example all staff have basic Makaton. Agency and par time staff are included in training courses. Governors and managers regularly review training but do not have an explicit training matrix or clear guidelines about what training agency staff must undertake. Staff receive regular supervision and appraisal to support them in providing a high quality service to students.

Staffing numbers are high ensuring a highly individualised approach to the care of the pupils. The staff team is diverse in composition reflecting the diversity of the pupils. The complex staffing deployments ensure staff are available at key times to meet the needs of the pupils.

Pupils and parents are actively engaged in sharing ideas and contributing to the development of the school. Pupils participate through residential meetings, key worker sessions, the school council and direct contact with senior managers. Relationships with parents are strong and those who responded to Parent View and to the point in time survey were positive about the quality of care and the progress their children make. Parent governors make a strong contribution to the development of the school and say that their views are listened to and incorporated into the development of the service.

The school has met two of the recommendations made at the last inspection and are continuing to seek funding for the expansion of the medical resource. Further developments have been made to empowering parents through training in the family partnership model. One parent governor said, 'All parents have benefitted from this. It has massively improved the confidence of parents communicating with health care professionals and is now embedded in our practice.'

The school has a strong focus on issues of equality and diversity. Pupils have highly diverse needs and the school ensures that it can meet these.



## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101093
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC010255
<b>DfE registration number</b>	212/7067

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

<b>Type of school</b>	Maintained School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	47
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	6 to 19
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R Legate
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	09/10/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 87880107
<b>Email address</b>	principal@lindenlodge.wandsworth.sch.uk

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