Linden Lodge School

improving lives

61 Princes Way, Wimbledon Park, London, SW19 6JB

Inspection dates

4-5 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders and the governing body have not ensured Phonics teaching (recognising the sounds that that the single central record contains all of the required information, and the procedures for recruiting new staff are not always applied with sufficient rigour.
- Staff routinely report any concerns about pupils' safety to staff responsible for child protection. However, these concerns are not logged centrally and so they are not easily accessible to all of these designated staff members.
- While teaching is typically good, staff do not routinely use a variety of communication systems to meet every pupil's needs.

- letters make) is not wholly effective.
- Leaders routinely collect information about how well the school is doing, and they examine it to get a picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, their analysis of this information sometimes lack sharpness, and this reduces its usefulness in determining future priorities.
- School leaders do not have the support of a large proportion of the staff team.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress when compared with the performance of pupils of the same age and starting points in other schools.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children make excellent progress in their learning and personal development.
- Pupils' behaviour over time is outstanding. Pupils show very positive attitudes.
- The school provides an excellent range of learning opportunities.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools. Residential pupils receive good care.

- In the context of their special needs, pupils make very good progress in developing characteristics such as tolerance and respect for others.
- Pupils' mobility is developed exceptionally well.
- Post-16 students make good progress. They are prepared well for leaving school.
- Therapists make a very important contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.
- Leaders and the governing body have maintained good quality teaching which ensures that the school has the capacity to improve further despite the many changes that have taken place.

Information about this inspection

- The residential provision and the school were inspected at the same time. The residential provision was visited during the day, after school and in the evening.
- Inspectors observed the quality of teaching in 14 lessons and inspectors were accompanied by a school leader in every one. Observations covered all age groups and 13 different members of staff were seen.
- Meetings were held with four members of the senior leadership team; three middle managers; members of the governing body, including the Chair; the human resources and governor services manager; nursing staff and the senior mobility specialist.
- A discussion was held with two representatives from local health services, and telephone conversations were had with the school's former school improvement partner and the local authority's head of special educational needs.
- Inspectors collected the views of parents and carers from the 44 responses on Parent View, the online questionnaire, and from the comments of a small number who met with inspectors.
- The severity of pupils' communication difficulties meant that it was not possible to collect their views from formal meetings. Therefore, inspectors acquired an appreciation of their feelings about school by observing their responses and the quality of their relationships with adults throughout the two days.
- The inspection team analysed the 112 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined a very wide range of documentation in school and in the residential provision. This included information about pupils' progress and achievement, attendance records, care plans, safeguarding procedures, restraint and incident logs, leaders' judgements about the school's strengths and development areas, and improvement planning.

Inspection team

Mike Kell, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Kate Robertson	Additional inspector
Seka Graovac	Social Care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Linden Lodge is a large special school for pupils with visual impairment. Many pupils also have additional severe, profound and complex difficulties, such as hearing impairment, physical disability and acute medical conditions. Pupils from 33 different local authorities currently attend.
- Along with the hearing and visually impaired services, the school forms the Wandsworth Sensory Support Service. The principal has management responsibility for all of this borough-wide service, but the discrete hearing and visually-impaired services did not feature in this inspection.
- The number in school has grown by about a tenth since the school was inspected last. Post-16 students account for a fifth of the school population, while there are only a small number of children in the early years provision. They can attend part-time or full-time.
- The school is recognised as a specialist regional centre for visual impairment and so it has residential provision for up to 36 pupils. This enables pupils from a wide geographical area to stay for occasional nights or weekly from Monday to Friday. At the time of the inspection, 43 pupils were making use of this provision.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. A small number are children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils represent a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with White British being the largest group. All pupils have significant communication difficulties and so the vast majority are at an early stage of using English.
- The school receives pupil premium funding for almost a third of its pupils, which is higher than the national average. Pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after.
- The school also receives additional funding for primary school physical education and sport.
- Significant restructuring of the school's senior leadership team took place in September 2013, following the retirement of two experienced senior leaders. Two assistant headteachers were promoted to heads of primary and secondary school respectively. The majority of assistant headteachers and middle managers also assumed their current responsibilities at that time or have been appointed since.
- The principal is a National Leader of Education.
- Pupils do not attend any other schools or alternative off-site education providers for any part of their education.
- School staff contribute to the wider community by providing an outreach service to local schools and to those in neighbouring boroughs, for instance in mobility training.
- A large number of nursing staff and a range of therapists, funded by local health services, work in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the systems for safeguarding pupils, which apply in both the school and residential provision, by:
 - ensuring that the single central record contains all required information
 - developing staff recruitment procedures to make certain that all future employees are suitable people to work with children
 - implementing procedures for ensuring that all concerns that are raised about any aspect of pupils' safety are logged centrally so that they are available to all staff with designated child protection responsibility.
- Make leadership and management more effective by:
 - ensuring that leaders and the governing body routinely check safeguarding procedures to ensure that they are effective and fit for purpose
 - making more critical use of the information that is gathered from school self-review when developing school improvement planning
 - analysing and interpreting pupils' progress data, building on improvements already in hand, in ways that provide a fuller picture of their performance compared with similar pupils nationally

- developing a school community in which all staff have higher morale and feel valued, appreciated and listened to, by communicating more effectively and sharing more openly the school's ambitions and the barriers that prevent them being achieved fully.
- Develop the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by making sure that staff routinely make best use of all communication approaches that are appropriate to pupils' learning needs, including the effective teaching of phonics.
- Develop the good residential provision by:
 - developing further the practice for recording the receipt and administration of medication
 - introducing a more systematic approach to supervision and the formal annual reviews of staff performance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The school has been through a very turbulent period since the last inspection. A number of factors have combined to reduce its overall effectiveness.
- Pupils with increasingly complex conditions and very diverse needs have been admitted, but the school has not been entirely successful in acquiring the additional resources they need from local health providers. This has added to the strain that staff face on a day-to-day basis.
- The new senior leaders and middle managers who were appointed were relatively inexperienced and are still developing the skills and personal qualities demanded by these roles. However, there are positive signs of improvement, not least of which is in the sustained good teaching which promotes pupils' good progress.
- The principal was not in school for a significant time due to a combination of health problems and long periods of time spent managing and supporting another school in the borough.
- These circumstances combined to affect the school's effectiveness adversely. In particular, staff morale declined. The majority of those who returned questionnaires expressed disquiet about aspects of the school, such as the lack of opportunities for professional development in the light of a changing school roll. They drew particular attention to the quality of leadership and management, most notably that shown by new and inexperienced leaders.
- No parents or carers expressed any concern about their children's safety and welfare. However, although there is no indication that pupils are at risk the school's safeguarding procedures require improvement. This is because the single system applied to school and residential staff recruitment is not always formally followed.
- The single central record contains the names of all those who should be there, but not all of the other information that is required. The school has all of this information but it is not entered in the record, and as such requirements are not fully met.
- The school has a good number of appropriately trained staff who lead on child protection, and staff always report any concerns or worries to them. They deal with these issues effectively. However, there is no system for centralising this information in a way that ensures comprehensive record keeping. Therefore, staff who are entitled to see this information and wish to get an overview cannot do so efficiently.
- Wide-ranging procedures are used to check how well the school is doing, and leaders examine this information when writing improvement plans. However, they do not do so with a sufficiently critical eye and so there tends to be too much documentation around determining priorities for the forthcoming year.
- During the period of unsettled staffing, some leaders did not examine the overview of whole school data thoroughly enough compared with other schools with similar pupils. Improved procedures are in place. Leaders and teachers have consistently rigorously analysed information relating to every individual pupil's progress. Consequently they have very good understanding of how well each one is doing with a positive impact on achievement.
- The residential provision is managed efficiently and effectively. Leaders and managers set high standards and have high aspirations for the pupils.
- Leaders have done a good job in providing opportunities for staff to observe colleagues' work and through the introduction of a buddy system to ensure that teaching is typically good. That good quality has been maintained in the face of the many changes that have taken place is a testament to the school's capacity for further development.
- Leaders maintain a calm and orderly school and effectively foster good relations. Respect for everyone and recognition and acceptance of others' differences and uniqueness are at the heart of the school's work. Equal opportunity and tolerance are evident throughout the school. Any hint of discrimination is swiftly dealt with. Pupils grow up being aware, insofar as they are able, of the features of British democratic society. They are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- All aspects of pupils' behaviour are checked routinely. The school uses this information well to put in place strategies that support individuals in learning or to manage their own behaviour.
- Teachers' performance management procedures are established and used to develop practice. Objectives link closely to individuals' roles and responsibilities. Residential staff receive training, guidance and supervision. However, the frequency and the quality of professional supervision and the formal review of staff performance across all residential roles lack rigour.
- All additional funding is used well. The impact of that which is provided for disadvantaged pupils is checked and this is shown to be supporting this group's achievement. The additional physical education funding has been used to improve resources, such as trampolines and tricycles that have contributed to

pupils developing their body awareness and developing gross motor skills.

- Leaders have a very thorough and detailed approach to planning a relevant curriculum. They successfully implement the excellent range of learning activities that the school provides, including opportunities for learning in the local community. The school adopts a specialist approach to planning and teaching these activities to each of three distinct groups: pupils working at P level 4 and below; those working at a higher P levels; and those with the most complex multi-sensory difficulties. (P levels describe the attainment of pupils who are working below National Curriculum Level 1.)
- The school has excellent links with parents and carers. This group is very appreciative of the work that the school does and acknowledges the progress that their children make in their learning and personal development. Almost without exception, they would recommend the school to others. The school supports and guides families very well when their children are making the transition from school to adult provision.
- The local authority maintains light touch support through its school improvement programme. The authority also uses the staff's expertise to provide support to local schools.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance requires improvement because governors have not ensured that that all statutory requirements relating to safeguarding have been met. All other statutory requirements are in place, including those that relate to residential provision.
- Governors monitor other aspects of the school's work well. They routinely check how well pupils are progressing in their personal development, such as behaviour, and are quite prepared to challenge, question or seek clarification about reports that are presented to them. During the unsettled period of staffing governors did not sufficiently rigorously evaluate how well the school was performing compared with other such schools. This is no longer the case with better systems to review and analyse data in now in place.
- The governing body faces a constant challenge in balancing expenditure with income as increasing numbers of pupils with acute medical conditions are admitted. They are managing to do this, but the problem is continually growing as more and more pupils require specialist nursing and medical care, which has significant financial implications.
- Governors have a good understanding of the amount of additional funding received, how it is spent and how it contributes to improving outcomes for pupils.
- The governing body receives detailed information about teachers' performance and governors know about the link between performance and pay. Governors are in a good position to relate this to reports on the quality of teaching that are provided.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. By the very nature of this special school and pupils' complex needs there are understandably very occasional lapses in the way pupils behave. These do not detract from the overall outstanding profile. Pupils make excellent progress in following instructions and complying with requests. These are examples of pupils' very positive attitudes which make a significant contribution to their good achievement.
- Routines are well established and followed consistently. Therefore, pupils develop a very good understanding of what is expected of them and learn to anticipate what is coming next.
- Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Pupils behave extremely well in classes and elsewhere. They concentrate and work hard. As a result, lessons are not disrupted and adults are able to concentrate on promoting learning rather than spending time on managing behaviour.
- Pupils' behaviour is so good that the school very rarely has the need to exclude anyone. There have been no permanent exclusions and fixed-term exclusions are extremely rare.
- Pupils are confronted by many challenges throughout the day, but they face them good naturedly. They invariably very keen to and enjoy school, attending as often as their special needs allow. Attendance is broadly average, but there is virtually no unauthorised absence as pupils only fail to attend when their medical conditions prevent them from doing so.
- Residential pupils' behaviour is exemplary as these pupils respond very well to staff's persistent reminders of good behaviour and of politeness. They listen, acknowledge what has been said and consider and respect the views of others. They relate to each other with kindness.
- The school has a very well planned approach to promoting all elements of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the promotion of British values. This structured approach is very

effective as pupils make excellent progress in developing an awareness of right and wrong, respecting others and accepting differences. Within the limitations imposed by the nature of their learning difficulties, they are very well prepared for leaving school and living in modern Britain.

- Pupils' improved mobility skills are a very important factor in their very good preparedness for leaving school. Pupils make excellent progress in this respect, to the extent that some move around the site confidently and independently.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly confident that the school deals effectively with any bullying or other types of intimidating behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. It is not good because elements of its safeguarding procedures relating to staff recruitment and record keeping are not followed and so statutory requirements are not met. In addition, the system for maintaining clear oversight of all safeguarding concerns that are raised is not organised efficiently.
- Other aspects of the school's obligations to keeping pupils safe are managed well. Risk assessments are undertaken for school-based activities and for activities off site.
- Pupils are treated with dignity and respect. Their personal needs are managed sensitively, and moving and handling procedures are followed carefully.
- Residential pupils receive a high level of care. They develop close and warm relationships with staff members. These relationships and the staff's caring attitudes and excellent skills underpin the excellent residential experience that pupils receive. Their medical needs are catered for effectively, although the procedures for recording the receipt and administration of medications are not entirely robust.
- Parents and carers are very confident that their children are safe in school. They are very positive about the level of care provided.
- Virtually all staff confirm that pupils are safe.
- Pupils are taught about internet use and the importance of e-safety, although very few use it or social media for communication purposes. The school does a great deal to encourage pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle through an impressive range of physical activities.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good across the school. Occasionally it is outstanding. Generally, pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Class teams have a very good understanding of each pupil's learning, behavioural and medical needs. Teachers' planning recognises these individual differences and so teachers provide activities that are adapted in ways that encourage each pupil to learn effectively.
- Activities are typically generally pitched at just the right level of difficulty. As a result, pupils are enthused to learn and so they remain mostly focused throughout lessons. If pupils' attention does wander or if pupils become agitated, adults skilfully encourage them to re-engage with learning.
- Teachers' and teaching assistants' regular checking of how well pupils are doing in lessons enables them to change activities if difficulties arise or if slightly more demanding work is appropriate.
- Developing pupils' communication skills is a key feature of all lessons. In particular, adults consistently promote pupils' language, as well as their speaking and listening skills, by maintaining a dialogue with pupils while they are engaged in activities. Other communication methods are generally used appropriately too, such as Braille, Moon and symbols; but, on occasion, pupils' preferred communication approach is not addressed fully. For instance, symbols are not used as much as they could be, and hand on hand finger spelling is not used consistently with pupils with profound visual and hearing difficulties.
- Teaching also develops other features of literacy well. Teaching of all subjects encourages pupils to improve their reading and writing skills, insofar as they able. However, the teaching of phonics is not wholly effective. Not all adults are sufficiently skilled in making the sounds properly that they want pupils to copy.
- Pupils' numeracy skills improve well because teaching seizes opportunities to develop them. This could be, for instance, practising counting in music or sequencing the order of events when following a recipe.
- Staff assess pupils' work well and indicate the extent of adult support that has been provided. They do all they can to involve pupils in this process by encouraging them to use 'smiley faces' to indicate how easily they found the work and how well they have done.
- Teachers record pupils' ongoing learning in detail and they use annotated photographic evidence of pupils' achievements very well to show progress in their learning over time.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress. It is not outstanding because not enough teaching is outstanding for pupils to make really rapid progress overtime.
- Overall, however, pupils make good progress from low starting points and in the context of what is expected of them as part of individual education plans. Data supports the view that pupils achieve well. Some pupils' achievement is outstanding, such as the small Year 6 group in 2014 who made excellent progress from the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils' good progress is recognised by the external accreditations that older pupils achieve.
- There is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils across the school. The three distinct groups of pupils who follow differently planned activities, determined by their attainment and complexity of learning difficulty, perform equally well.
- There is no variation in pupils' progress when other groups are compared. Disadvantaged pupils do as well as those who do not receive additional funding. Pupils from different ethnic groups make comparable progress and boys and girls perform similarly.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 11 make good progress in English for their ages and low starting points. Their achievement compares well with similar pupils in other schools. Their communication skills develop well, which improves their self-esteem, confidence and independence.
- Pupils make equally good progress in mathematics. They develop a good understanding of number and a growing awareness of space, shape and measures.
- The good progress that pupils make in English and mathematics indicates that they are just beginning to close the gap between their attainment and that of pupils nationally.
- The very many stimulating and informative wall displays around the school support pupils' good progress. These include photographs and displays of pupils' work that clearly demonstrate the value that the school places on celebrating pupils' talents, identity and uniqueness.
- Residential pupils participate in a wide range of activities after the school day. These provide many positive experiences that enhance their well-being and promote their personal development. These new and varied experiences also encourage their learning by stimulating their curiosity.
- The range of therapists works very closely with staff to ensure that pupils can learn as effectively as possible by ensuring that their physical, emotional and mobility needs are managed.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children get off to a flying start in this excellent provision because it is extremely well led and managed. Learning activities are particularly well planned and organised.
- All available time is used very well because detailed planning ensures that class teams are very well briefed about their roles and learning resources are in place ready for use. Routines are very well established and children's behaviour is excellent.
- Leaders and managers have an excellent understanding of strengths and what is needed for further development. Outstanding planning supports outstanding teaching. Children are assessed meticulously and all adults in class teams have detailed knowledge of every child's needs and potential barriers to learning. Adults use this knowledge extremely well to provide very precise activities that are designed to encourage learning. They are skilled at recognising small steps in children's progress that illustrate the children have developed new skills or understanding, and are quick to extend activities that build on this.
- Children's achievement is outstanding. The excellent progress that children make in their learning and personal development prepares them very well for moving into Year 1. In particular, they make very rapid gains in their ability to communicate, and in their physical development and mobility.
- Staff are very vigilant in ensuring that children work and play safely. They are looked after very well. This is much appreciated by parents

The sixth form provision

is good

- There is no separate post-16 provision and so the quality and impact of leadership and management are the same as in the rest of the school.
- Post-16 students are not taught separately. They are taught in classes alongside secondary-aged pupils who have similar needs and who require the same range and style of learning opportunities. They are generally taught well. They typically make good progress in their learning, particularly in developing their communication and numeracy skills.
- Students make especially good progress in many aspects of their personal development. Their self-esteem and confidence grow and this is frequently linked to their increased ability to move around the site independently or with decreasing support.
- The post-16 provision does much to promote students' ability to do things for themselves. There is a consistent focus on developing independence and the acquisition of self-help skills that will stand them in good stead in the future.
- Students' good academic achievement and the excellent progress that students make in their personal development contribute much to helping them to become more mature and responsible adults. As a result, they leave school well prepared for the next stage of their lives. In the majority of cases this means continuing education or training.

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care is good
Residential pupils' safety is adequate
Leadership and management of the residential provision are good

- The residential provision makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. Outcomes for residential pupils are exceptional in both of these areas.
- The residential environment is appropriately adapted and equipped to meet pupils' needs. The accommodation is spacious, light, warm, welcoming, comfortable and homely. The bedrooms are highly personalised to reflect the interests of the pupils who regularly stay in them.
- Pupils are content and relaxed and are very happy to stay. Families confirm that their children always look forward to overnight stays. The atmosphere in the residential house is calm, orderly, harmonious and happy.
- Staff are very sensitive to pupils' needs and feelings and are very skilled at encouraging pupils to express themselves. This makes an important contribution to supporting the work done in school in developing pupils' communication and social skills.
- Pupils' feelings and views are central to how the residential provision operates and develops its practice. They know that their views count and that they are valued. This makes them feel confident and enables them to explore, make choices and to develop an appreciation of themselves and their identity.
- Residential provision is well led and managed. Routines are well established and all staff know what to do and what is expected of them. Leaders and managers do all that they can to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils. That the judgement regarding pupils' safety in this facility is 'adequate' rather than 'good' reflects reservations relating to whole school provision. Leaders and managers of the residential provision follow procedures carefully and ensure pupils are well looked after.
- Staff are well trained and highly skilled at calming anxieties and managing the frustrations that pupils sometimes experience. Positive approaches to promoting constructive behaviour are used and there is no use of sanctions. When the staff have to intervene physically, these interventions are appropriate in order to protect the pupil and others from harm.
- Staff members interact with pupils with patience, tolerance, compassion and unconditional respect. As such, they provide excellent role models. Staff provide clear boundaries within a supportive environment.
- The residential provision helps to develop pupils' mobility and sensory awareness very well and so the pupils move confidently through their environment. Depending on their ability, pupils take progressively more responsibility for themselves and for the environment that they share. The residential provision promotes independence very effectively and overall it makes a very good contribution to equipping pupils for a successful transition to the next stage of their lives.
- Residential pupils and their parents and carers trust the residential staff. This helps to keep pupils calm and enables them to approach new experiences positively because they have a deep-seated feeling of being safe and secure.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.
		A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

Boarding/Residential provision				
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

Email address

Unique reference number101093Social care unique reference numberSC010255Local authorityWandsworthInspection number449541

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision 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.

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Type of school Special School category Community special 2-19 Age range of pupils **Gender of pupils** Mixed Gender of pupils in the sixth form Mixed 146 Number of pupils on the school roll Of which, number on roll in sixth form 28 Number of boarders on roll 43 Appropriate authority The governing body Chair Graham Lovelock **Principal** Roger Legate **Date of previous school inspection** November 2009 020 8788 0107 **Telephone number** 020 8780 2712 Fax number

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