



Standard 3 Visit

Name of Service	Lexden Springs Residential Special School
Date of previous visit	22.09.25
Date of this visit	25.11.25
Standard 3 Visitor	Mark Goode
Time of visit	15.00 – 17.00
Visit Supported by	Lucy Baines – Head of Care Jennifer Grotier – Headteacher Luke Francis – Deputy Headteacher

About the Independent Visitor

Visiting the residential provision today is Mark Goode. Mark has worked in the Education sector for the past 24 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 (SCCIF (04/09/25), NMS (05/09/2022)).

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

Lexden Springs is a specialist School that supports students with learning disabilities. The School is on a journey of growth and can now accommodate up to 300 pupils, whereas up until recently this was around 250. This is shown in the amount of interest in boarding places currently. The last three years had seen the boarding provision expand into a Residential Service which enables up to 30 students to board, and the provision is under constant review related to scope and staffing to support as many young people as possible. The standard 3 visits consider the School & Residential Service on a termly basis to review the details as represented above in the introductory section.

A new development this year has seen a full re-branding of the Residential Service and the creation of a new logo for what is now known as 'Spring Lodge'. Upon my arrival on a Tuesday afternoon in the fourth week of the second half term of the School year, I was greeted by the Head of Care. It was explained that there are currently 3 boarders accessing the Residential Provision and sleeping over, with a further 5 in the process of attending tea visits after liaison with families who have been interested in boarding. The cohort contains a fresh group of boarders, with a number that were attending no longer doing so. This is a part of wider developments explored in the discussions around the Statement of Purpose and aims for Spring Lodge as discussed in the consultations with the Head of Care and Headteacher lower down this report.

I undertook a detailed consultation with the Head of Care and caught up on developments since my last visit in term 1 of the last academic year and carried out all mandatory checks that are required of a Standard 3 visit. I spent time alongside staff and the two boarders that were present for the evening, and also met with the Headteacher for a consultation. In the days that followed this visit I arranged a call with the Deputy Headteacher and DSL for the School, and I also reached out to the parents of two current boarders in the days after the visit.

Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and verification in this visit
<u>National Minimum Standards Annual Review</u> For the Head of Care to review the date of the last version of this requirement and make plans for the completion of this for this year. It may be wise to align this with the recommendation below.	<u>Response After Visit</u> I plan on booking time with SLT for us to review the NMS as I feel this will give us a good indication on areas we need to strengthen. <u>Verification in this visit</u> The Head of Care and Headteacher explained that this is in the process of being worked upon. This is covered in greater detail in the consultations section below.
<u>Statement of Purpose/SCCIF Audit Update</u> For the Head of Care (and other key School Leaders) to complete deliberations over the next version of the Statement of Purpose and ensure that it meets the aims of the School, and matches the requirements of Standard 1 of the NMS as well.	<u>Response After Visit</u> I plan on booking time with SLT for us to review the Statement of Purpose I feel this will give the team direction on the referral process and how we are planning to monitor progress and write our pupils targets. <u>Verification in this visit</u> The consultations section below has discussion over these areas after I covered them with the Head of Care and the Headteacher.

Mandatory Areas	
Topic	Comments
Records of attendance/exclusion/missing episodes 20.9	The Head of Care explained that no exclusions have taken place since the last standard 3 visit in term 1, and that there have been no missing episodes. Average attendance figures for the boarders currently engaging with boarding stands at 91.71%. Whole School attendance currently sits at an overall average of 90.8%, with absence at 1.4% unauthorised absence and 7.8% authorised This indicates that attending residential is a positive influence upon attendance at School. Individual attendance for each boarder currently stands at: HR 95.16, DW 91.8, MM 84.68, INB 94.26, JM 95.16, AMP 95.97, AS 84.68, LB 91.94
Complaints 19.1, 19.2, 19.3	The Head of Care explained that there have been no complaints related to the Residential Service since my last visit in term 1. Complaints have generally been a rare feature of the operations at Lexden Springs in my time supporting the Residential Service and the strength of the proactive and well-informed care that I observed in this visit give rise to no concerns that this will change in the immediate future. I have also had some exit interviews shared with me as part of this visit.
Sanctions 20.6	The Head of Care informed me that there have again been no sanctions applied in boarding since my last visit in term 1 of last year. The detail gathered for every boarder that joins residential remains a key reason for this. As an example, I noted the use of bespoke regulating activities in this visit for the boarders that preclude them being distressed and settling in at the start of sessions. This manner of approach, in my view, supports the prevention of discontent and complaints are rare as a result.
Restraint (including rest.int) 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6,20.7	Once again it was explained to me that there have been no incidents of restraint or restrictive interventions since my last visit in term 1. The boarders’ needs are based upon proactive information gathering and observations, detailed understanding and regular reviews. Restraints are avoided as a result.
Risk Assessments Appendix B (11,16)	The Head of Care and I discussed the status of the boarding cohort as being a new group and as such I reviewed the paperwork that is in place presently. The elements held are detailed and being used to construct comprehensive plans. They are a live work in progress presently. For the learners that are undertaking tea visits, there are yet to be home visits, and this element is a crucial stage in assessing risks and preparing for overnight stays. There are 3 boarders that have full plans, and these remain of a high standard based upon the detailed intelligence gathering that I have referenced above. I have no concerns over the detail held, its use or the processes underway. I will be looking to review the processes in my visits after the Christmas break.
Placement Plans 7.2	
How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.	
During this visit I spoke with both the Deputy Headteacher/Senior DSL for the School and the Head of Care and was informed that there have been no fresh referrals outside of the School since my last visit in term 1 of the last academic year. All systems for safeguarding boarders remain in place and the general oversight of safeguarding for boarders remains of a high standard. The discussion covered the fact that there has been a new system introduced that sees a termly audit undertaken by the broader trust support across different schools. I will look to review these documents moving forward.	
Suitability of the building, furnishings & external environment.	
During this visit I once again discussed and considered the layout and decorative order at Spring Lodge and noted the fact that new items are in the process of being added to meet the needs of the boarders. These include interactive v-tech toys and will likely evolve as the information gathered about the coming boarders is completed in home visits. The completed internal decorations that took place recently mean that the three operational houses all have a refreshed feel, and a distinctive look. The overall feeling is still of a high standard of decoration and equipment, which makes Spring Lodge remain an extremely pleasant place to spend time and meets the needs of the boarders extremely well.	

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.

Head of Care and Headteacher

The Head of Care and I discussed a range of areas as detailed below and I also spent time discussing strategic developments and the broad aims of the Residential setup with the Headteacher as part of this visit. The details are contained in the paragraphs below:

Statement of Purpose Developments (including Children's Version)

- The Head of Care and Headteacher explained that the current situation sees families that have expressed interest in boarding being enabled to access the provision as this had been extended as an offer. In the broader picture it is clear however, that aligning the role played by Spring Lodge with progress for learners in school more closely is a key feature moving forward. The Headteacher explained that the current situation related to the statement of purpose is that it is being drafted in a way that is set to involve parental consultation.
- The aim is to see collaboration with families, social care and the inclusion of data based information that can underpin the ways that Spring Lodge has an impact for learners.
- The visit saw the Head of Care share the newest version of a statement of purpose for children. This contains a simple description of the ethos, staff, and broad aims of Spring Lodge. It also explains the number of houses, how many nights a week that children can stay over, lists the activities available, the presence of Independent Support, equality and diversity principles, and explains how to complain. It has dual communication means covered through simple text and pictorial representations.
- The simplified version is very much suited to the needs of the boarders at Lexden Springs.

Development Plans

- This was shared as a part of the visit, and it is a detailed and comprehensive live document that covers a wide range of areas. Many have been completed (along with descriptors of the evidence base) and it is clear that areas rolled over from 2024-25 have generally been concluded (and may need updating in the RAG rating system). There are a number of areas of current focus detailed that are being worked upon. These include the NMS audit referenced below, the Statement of Purpose revision, SCCIF audit, Headteachers' report, aspects of premises/Health and Safety oversight, teachers' connections to how learners are identified, governors' oversight and of course the links between the Statement of Purpose and the learners' gains from attending. The document is comprehensive and illustrates the clear ambition to draw the best practice together coherently.

Annual National Minimum Standards Review

- This was discussed during the visit and is set for completion soon. I agreed to undertake a review of this when it can be shared with me.

Residential Handbook and Induction Materials

- This has been shared with me during this visit and it is a very detailed and comprehensive guide to the operations at Spring Lodge. It offers a full overview of processes and is detailed in the Development Plan as well. I am impressed with the care and attention to detail in place and it illustrates the point made in the section related to the evolution of the Statement of Purpose. This is to say that the role played by Spring Lodge at Lexden Springs is a key feature of the school, that is requiring of a prominent focus. The Headteacher explained that during parents' evenings the Residential aims are a central part of the discussion and this resource demonstrates this well.

Exit Interviews

- As part of this visit, 3 such interviews were shared with me. The details captured include the perspectives of families, key workers from Spring Lodge and class teachers. They also contain reflections on overall progress, and suggestions for next steps. The examples shared illustrate a thoughtful and reflective process that captures positive evidence of the impact that staying at Spring Lodge has had for leavers. Naturally the consideration of the next phase of Spring Lodge can be in part shaped by the feedback from leavers, and these documents are a very positive indicator of how the processes have an impact upon the boarders themselves, as well as for families that note developments as they take place.

Scrapbooks

- The Head of Care showcased a series of books of images of boarders that has begun since the new arrivals have started. At present these are at an early stage of development, but they are an extremely good idea to capture evocative images right from the start of the boarding process. The opportunity exists to capture a colourful and vibrant social story in many ways, and I look forward to seeing these develop as the boarders spend time in Spring Lodge over the coming terms.

Time Spent with staff and boarders

- During this visit I spent two periods of time alongside the two pupils that were in Spring Lodge together. It was explained that one was staying overnight, and the other attending for a tea visit. One had experienced a tricky day in school, and the first section of my sharing time saw the two engaging in a play activity in adjoining rooms. They were in close proximity but not interacting, and being comfortable with others is a gradual process for them. This was being enabled as a regulation activity after transitioning from school into Spring Lodge.
- I returned around an hour later to see the two learners still self-occupying and happy in the space. The rationale was explained and it was evident that the plans are carefully observed and being used to shape care moving forward. Staff understood the purpose of the activities and were interacting with the learners pro-actively.

Call with Deputy Headteacher

In the days that followed the visit I was able to arrange and undertake a call with the Deputy Headteacher to follow up on events. We discussed the safeguarding elements covered higher up this report, and he also shared a draft document that details a revised process for reporting and recording bruises. This builds upon previous practice updates that were reinforced when concerns were raised from an Ofsted inspection in the recent past. The overall effect is to clarify the differences between accidental and non-accidental injuries to support staff understanding and what expectations are in place. In my view these documents add strength to processes. This is particularly useful in the light of the fact that boarders from the base pathway are now accessing boarding for the first time and their needs are somewhat different.

Consultation with Parents

In the days following this visit I reached out to the parents of three boarders to capture their views. As of the time of this report being completed I have spoken to one, and the parent explained that the boarder in question has been boarding for around 5 months, and that the predominant aims have been set out to be to develop better social skills – especially when out in a public space – and to develop a greater degree of flexibility around what is due to happen. The parent explained that the boarder has grown accustomed to boarding and looks forward to it, and that the staff have aligned practice related to routines alongside home routines well.

The staff were reflected as being very helpful, always using strong communication skills and sharing clear plans at all times. The parent then reflected that the boarder has been doing well, making progress and that there are no concerns at all related to the support offered.

Thematic Areas	
Standard/SCCIF Reference	Evidence / Observation
	None undertaken in this visit.

Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision
This visit saw me note the continuation of the re-evaluation of the operations of Spring Lodge, and the time being taken to get this setup correctly is worthwhile in my view. The leadership are clear that the correct setup is worth the time being taken and I am happy to be supporting this process as the year passes. It is clear that honouring pledges of boarding whilst the remit and purpose evolves will see a greater number experience the benefits of boarding, which was again shown to be responsive to need and thorough in this visit. I thank those involved in this visit for their time and look forward to my next visit in term 3 and pushing ahead with my support as Spring Lodge is taken forward. I would also like to wish everyone at Lexden Springs a peaceful and well-deserved Christmas holiday.
Name: Mark Goode Date: 03.12.25

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT		
Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<u>Care Planning & Risk Assessment Processes</u> For the current process of gathering information and preparing for boarding for the next cohort of residents to continue, and for the results to be made available for scrutiny in my next visit. <u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The overall experiences and progress of children</u> <i>Professional practice consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained improvement to the lives of children. Professional practice responds positively to children's complex and changing needs. There are examples of excellent practice that are worth sharing widely.</i>	This will be ready for Mark for his next visit, keyworkers have been allocated and some home visits have already taken place. This audit will be ready to share with Mark for his next visit.	Term 3 2026 Term 3 2026

<u>NMS Review and Statement of Purpose Update</u> For these two documents to be pushed forward and be shared with me in my next visit if they are available at this stage.	This will be ready to share with Mark on his next visit.	Term 3 2026
<u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): How well children are helped and protected</u> <i>Professional practice results in sustained improvement to the lives of children. Highly effective planning manages and minimises risks inside and outside of the school.</i>	This will be ready to share with Mark on his next visit.	Term 3 2026

Head of Residential Care's Comments
We are enjoying meeting new pupils and recently recruited two members of staff which will help us offer the provision out to more pupils over the next term. We are all looking forward to when we can open two houses at the same time on a regular basis and this is what we are working towards.
Name: Lucy Baines
Date: 10/12/25

Deputy Head Teacher's Comments
We are in the process of welcoming new boarders this term and it has been great to see the progress they have made with adapting to the provision already. We are in the process of completing the NMS review and updating the statement of purpose, this should be completed by the end of January.
Name: Luke Frances
Date: 10/12/25

Formal Response from the Governing Body, Trustees, or Proprietor of the School
"Yet again a report that reflects the passion and determination of the setting, I too would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas."
Name: Gary Smith CEO
Date: 10/12/25