



Standard 3 Visit

Name of Service	Lexden Springs Residential Special School
Date of previous visit	20.05.26
Date of this visit	07.07.26
Standard 3 Visitor	Mark Goode
Time of visit	2.30pm – 5.00pm
Visit Supported by	Lucy Baines – Head of Care 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.

This visit to Spring Lodge took place on a Tuesday afternoon in the penultimate week of the school year. I was greeted by the Head of Care and we undertook a detailed update related to the mandatory areas that are required to be checked in a Standard 3 visit. We also discussed evidence sources for the progress made by boarders and I supported reviewing the 'OFSTED Readiness' of the service once again given that the next inspection now seems overdue. It was explained that another new boarder has joined Spring Lodge since the last visit in term 5, and that staffing has remained stable. The Head of Care explained that there have been some staff absences recently, and that HR are supporting processes. The Head of Care and I were joined part way through the visit by the Deputy Headteacher, who gave a detailed safeguarding update and we also discussed a range of other areas as covered in the consultation section lower down this report. I then reached out to a number of parents in the days following this visit, and the feedback I have gathered is detailed below as well.

Areas requiring action from previous visit

Action Point from Previous Visit	Provider's Response and verification in this visit
<u>Care Plans' Updates evidence</u> For there to be consideration given to date stamping and recording when attempts to secure parental views on Care Plans have been attempted (should contact prove elusive).	<u>Provider's Response</u> This has been shared via email and discussed in the last team meeting. <u>Verification in this visit</u> This process is now in place and also recorded in CPOMS under the contact log. It will be available as evidence when the next Inspection takes place.
<u>Progress Update Statements Boarders</u> For the process of recording progress in a summary fashion to be moved forward as discussed in this visit.	<u>Provider's Response</u> I have asked all staff to contribute in this piece of week to help with a case study for each pupil that we currently have boarding with us. <u>Verification in this visit</u> I noted this is now taking place and reviewed a sample of them. I reinforced that best practice would be to update these monthly or termly so that they are always up to date.
<u>Cohort Planning for September 2026 to July 2027</u> For this process to be moved forward as discussed in this visit.	<u>Provider's Response</u> Head of Care to plan an open evening for parents and book in tours following the open evening and put together slides and an information pack.

	<u>Verification in this visit</u> This is set to take place once the next incarnation of the service is ready to roll out and seems likely to take part into the start of the next academic year.
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 5, and that there have also been no missing episodes. Average attendance figures for the boarders currently engaging with boarding stands at 96.29%. Whole School attendance currently sits at an overall average of 90.3%, with absence at 1% unauthorised absence and 8.6% authorised This indicates that attending residential is a positive influence upon attendance at School. Individual attendance for each boarder currently stands at: AMP 96.2, DW 97.25, LB 96.74, INB 96.72, MS 94.26, ER 97.53, HR 98.37, BM 96.13, JM 98.37, AS 92.12, MM 95.58
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 5. This reflects the fact that complaints are a very rare feature of the operations at Lexden Springs and this is, in my view, a tribute to the way that care is based upon a strong process of conferring between staff at the school, residential service and parents.
Sanctions/ Consequences 20.6	The Head of Care informed me that there have again been no sanctions applied in boarding since my last visit in term 5. The detail gathered for every boarder that joins residential is updated regularly (as detailed above) and remains a key reason for this. The recent work to ensure that regular reviews take place over the impact of boarding is a further piece of evidence that the staff are not complacent in any way.
Restraint (including rest. int) 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7	It was explained to me that there have once again been no incidents of restraint or restrictive interventions since my last visit in term 5. The boarders’ needs are central to how information gathering supports processes. The safeguarding discussion that I held in this visit also illustrated how work alongside Social Care colleagues supports the care well. Complaints remain very rare as a result.
Risk Assessments Appendix B (11,16)	The plans in place and the reviews that take place were features that I discussed with the Head of Care in this visit once again. It was explained that the recent review of all boarders’ plans has seen evolution and I sampled this work as part of the visit. The updates are clearly in evidence and I noted evidence of how parents can remark upon reports. I suggested that this is a strong feature of the work and can be retained as written, and responded to, to showcase how the plans are responsive and living documents that have the boarders’ interests and needs at their heart.
Placement Plans 7.2	
How well Children and Young People are Safeguarded.	
During this visit I spoke with the Deputy Headteacher for the School, alongside the Head of Care, and he explained that there have been no fresh safeguarding referrals that have arisen from boarding time since my last visit in term 5. That having been said, we again discussed support being offered to boarders and families that require it. Behaviours that have been observed have been interpreted as communication of needs and discomfort in some, and this has seen suitable support brought to bear.	

In some cases, this has seen EHCP reviews brought forward, and the establishment of multi-disciplinary meetings around learners/boarders to ensure the relevant and needed support is in place. This has been supported in some cases with CHIN meetings being arranged as well.

Other elements discussed included how liaison with Social Workers is maintained when they change, and the engaging of therapists as needed to do all that can be done to future proof support. In short, everything that is being done is as pro-active as can be achieved in the name of meeting the needs of the learners and boarders. They remain central to the decisions made, and as a result I am confident in stating that safeguarding vigilance remains strong in my view. I have no concerns after this visit.

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 it is clear that the homeliness of the accommodation remains at the forefront of considerations. In this visit I noted how the proximity of the main school resources are a very useful feature for supporting boarders' needs, and that the Wildlife Garden continues to develop. There is a connection with the college that uses another of the original residential buildings in this regard as 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.

Discussion with the Head of Care

The Head of Care explained that as the new year approaches, the brief of Spring Lodge is set to change to see Year 9 targeted for boarding generally. The adaptations to the Statement of Purpose and the liaison with parents that are required will follow in due course. I agreed to support this with a review of the 'Statement of Purpose' at the relevant time. The other discussions that we held in this visit are as follows:

Review of Evidence of progress and activities – essentially related to OFSTED's imminent annual inspection

- Voice Folder: The Head of Care shared the fact that this is being maintained and updated with events as they take place.
- NMS Review/HT report (April 2026): This remains ready for viewing and underlines the evolution of the service as explained above.
- Scrapbooks and other details: I once again viewed these and was very impressed with the detail in them. There are overall scrapbooks for each house that showcase very positively the events and activities engaged in by boarders. There are also individual versions for each boarder that contain equally vivid images of activities and events, but there is also an accompanying narrative for each. These are designed to go with boarders when they leave and the Head of Care explained that when this happens, there will be evidence retained as a record of the work for external visitors to view.
- Trust Support: The Head of Care reflected the fact that the Trust Support Officer remains heavily involved and has reviewed documentation since my last visit. There is also a clear connection through the school's Compliance Officer that supports all aspects of health and safety, maintenance and external elements as well. This all sees the Head of Care well supported.
- Independent Person: There is a visit planned for as soon as it can be arranged with the sister school to ensure this link is maintained.

- Use of Buildings in daytime: The Head of Care explained that pupils from the school often use Spring Lodge in the daytime for aspects such as sensory baths, social skills development training, free choice time and play and one especially enjoys Friday tours and time out of class. This is being seen as a potential preface to becoming a future Year 9 boarder.
- Forward Planning intom2026-27: The Head of Care shared a matrix of advance planning that covers a wide range of areas of the work undertaken to ensure that all areas are managed and planned for strategically. This ensures nothing important is missed and covers:
 - National Minimum Standards Work
 - Staff Training Foci
 - Headteachers' Report
 - Special Events
 - SCCIF review
 - Development Planning

The organised nature of this plan is a very comprehensive overview and reflects a determined pro-activity that can adapt as time passes, but ensures all parties involved are fully aware of what is required.

Time Spent alongside Boarders and Staff

This visit saw me note how briefings took place to support the relatively high needs boarder that was in residence. There had been strong collaboration and information passing between the school and the boarding staff. This was all the more important as the day was extremely hot during the second summer heatwave and temperatures were set to reach mid-30s. I visited the boarder in the garden space of the main school and noted he had already been supported with food that generally meets his needs, but this had not been wanted (probably owing to the extreme heat). The boarder was very happily relaxing in a swing with several staff in attendance. They were set to re-offer food later in the evening when the temperature dropped and had ensured that suitable sun cream and hydration had taken place. I had no concerns at all related to the support and feel that the staff were being very pro-active in some difficult circumstances.

Consultations with Parents

In the days that followed this visit, I spoke to the parent of a recently started boarder, who explained the following to me:

- The boarder is now 15 and has been attending Lexden School for 11 years (essentially their entire school experience). Boarding has been in place for around 6 weeks, and although space has been challenging to find, the parent reported that the support that has been brought to bear has been greatly appreciated.
- The support was detailed as being one evening a week presently and has been intended to support being able to transition to a different place after school, and to give the family some needed help as well.
- The parent explained that whilst there had been scepticism that it could be a success at first, it has proven to be a very successful venture with a team of skilled staff demonstrating that support from outside of the regular setup can have an impact. This has given the family hope for further successes in this regard in the future. It is considered to be very early days, but the process has given hope.
- The staff's communication has been praised and the parent explained that there is a genuine feeling of trust related to the Residential Team and their work with the boarder. This has gone a long way to repairing the parent's confidence in others giving this form of support and is not to be underestimated.
- There were no concerns at all expressed when asked.

Thematic Areas	
Standard/SCCIF Reference	Evidence / Observation
	None undertaken in this visit.
Summary of Visit and Quality of Provision	
This visit showcased the readiness of the Head of Care and the entire staff team at Lexden Springs for the next Inspection. I feel that care, and all evidence systems are strong and align the judgements of the leaders in a way that illustrates the strengths very well. I noted very strong care in this visit and feel that they are well prepared. I have no concerns at all regarding the care in place and point to the parental feedback as further testament to this as well. I wish everyone well for the coming Summer Holiday and hope all will have a well-deserved rest. I am looking forward to supporting the team after the holiday as the new school year begins and the next incarnation of the service is moved towards.	
Name: Mark Goode Date: 09.07.26	

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR RESPONSE FOR THIS VISIT		
Actions	Comments from Provider	Expected Completion Date
<u>Progress Updates</u> For these to be updated regularly to reflect changes over time. This will ensure that the most up to date versions are always available to be viewed. <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 is a good idea and I plan to calendar this into my work diary regular updates.	Term 1 2026-27
<u>Responses to Care Plan Updates from Parents</u> For the staff to respond to any adjustments made by parents when plans are sent home for reviews in ways that can be showcased as evidence of liaison taking place. <u>SCCIF (Outstanding Criteria): The effectiveness of leaders and managers</u> <i>Leaders and managers create a culture of aspiration and positivity. They have high expectations of their staff to change and improve the lives of the children they are responsible for.</i>	We have started to add this information onto CPOMS	Term 1 2026-27

Head of Residential Care's Comments

We are looking forward to coming back in September and running with the new year 9 Model, it feels like now is the right time to evolve the service and we hope to continue to grow and offer our boarders a wide range of positive experiences staff are looking forward to a well-deserved rest.

Name: Lucy Baines

Date: 15th July 2026

Deputy Head Teacher's Comments

After a positive year we are excited to be changing our model and welcoming our year 9 pupils to our provision. We hope this will further embed the learning of life skills and preparation for adulthood in our borders.

Name: Luke Frances

Date: 15th July 2026

Formal Response from the Governing Body, Trustees, or Proprietor of the School

“This report reflects a great year of effort and exemplifies what such effort brings. Thanks to all concerned.”

Name: Gary Smith

Date: 15th July 2026