

Linden Lodge School

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

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This residential special school is based in Wandsworth and is part of Southfields Academy Trust. The school provides education and residential provision for disabled children, including those who are severely sight-impaired, multi-disabled visually and hearing-impaired, and those with profound physical and multiple learning difficulties, including sensory and communication difficulties. All students have an education, health and care plan.

The school has 20 full-time residential places. Children can stay for up to four nights a week. The residential accommodation is provided in a separate house, which is situated in the school grounds. At the time of the inspection, the school had 152 students on roll, of which 17 students were accessing the residential provision.

The head of residential has an appropriate qualification and has been in post since 21 November 2022.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 February 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 28 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make exceptional progress in the residential provision. They receive extremely well-planned and holistic care from highly skilled specialist staff, including paediatric nurses, therapists, teachers and qualified residential staff. All staff are deeply committed to improving children's experiences and life chances.

Children are looked after by a nurturing team who know them very well. Staff work well with others to make sure that children are safe and happy when they come to stay. Parents and children speak overwhelmingly positively about their time in the provision. The school environment is lively and fun, and children have a range of opportunities to help them thrive.

The voice of children is strong at this school. Children say that they feel listened to and know that their opinions are valued. This has a positive impact on their engagement and communication skills. All staff show appropriate understanding of children's communication needs and work well with speech and language therapists. Staff describe the residential provision as a wonderful community that nurtures and guides all children to reach their potential using a variety of technology to support children with visual and multi-sensory impairments.

Staff carefully support children's welfare and emotional wellbeing. The school now has its own creative therapy team that visits the residential provision weekly. The team work well with staff to understand children's needs. Children attend a range of creative therapies such as music, art and dance, to improve their social skills and overall wellbeing. Children know that there are many safe and competent adults, who have their best interest at heart and are available to help them with whatever they need. This helps children to feel valued and safe, which in turn helps them to focus on learning. Children also have access to the school's mental health lead and a team of therapists for additional support.

Staff are committed to preparing children to live more independently in the future. Excellent use is made of the waking day curriculum that allows residential staff to progress individualised personal learning goals set in school. Staff work extremely well with education staff to ensure that children's learning goals are reviewed, and support required is provided. Activities and key-work sessions are carefully planned to ensure that they support children to achieve the goals that are important to them. Children speak with pride about their own achievements including cooking for their families, completing their own personal care, socialising with others and being able to make friends. Some children have secured work experience in the school's library which they are very proud about. Excellent joint working between the residential and education teams, and robust processes for sharing information, ensures that all staff have up to date information about students' current needs.

The induction of children to the residential provision is very sensitive, thoughtful and effective. The team work together and with families and placing local authorities to understand the needs of new children holistically. Staff make sure that children receive encouragement and praise for their good work and constructive behaviours. This helps children to develop confidence and self-esteem.

The high-quality care received by children helps them to make the most of all the opportunities available to them. Regular activities include children attending sports events, camping, shopping trips, drama club, weekly scouts and swimming. Children are involved in decisions about the activities that they would like to do. Alternative activities are provided if children change their minds about what they want to do.

Parents speak very highly of the residential provision and the positive difference it makes for their children. They say that children, including those who are new to the service, have made impressive progress in relation to their independence. Staff work well with parents to ensure that children have consistency and help them to understand their children's needs. One child who could not previously manage to sleep in a bed is now able to do so and has developed good sleeping routines. Staff are working with the child's family to help them to develop similar routines at home.

The quality of the physical environment is excellent. Leaders have responded well to the last inspection and completed significant decorations. The residential provision is welcoming, comfortable and homely with lots of beautiful murals designed by the children. Children have personalised their bedrooms with their own pictures and individual colours. All visual displays have been created in a way that ensures that they do not create an institutional feel.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Safeguarding practice is both exceptional and creative. The head of the residential provision is also the deputy designated safeguarding lead who attends weekly safeguarding and behaviour support meetings. Leaders, managers and staff have a sound understanding of children's vulnerabilities and risks. They work well with a team of therapists to understand behaviour. This understanding, alongside their strong relationships with children, enables them to provide effective, individualised care in response to any safeguarding issues raised. The safeguarding leadership team have regular external supervision and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) attends some of the meetings which adds extra scrutiny of the safeguarding practices.

Children receive effective support to maintain good health. Detailed health care plans are in place and completed by the school nurses. These provide staff with clear information about how to meet children's health needs. There are extremely robust systems for administering and recording medication completed by the nurses and health care assistant. A pharmacist who visits weekly audits medication practice and

is available anytime for consultations. As a result, there have been no medication errors recorded since the last inspections.

Processes for managing health and safety matters and maintenance tasks are excellent. As a result, repairs are completed in a timely manner and the physical environment is safe and secure for children.

Safer recruitment practices are used effectively. Staff involved in the recruitment process have completed safer recruitment training and show excellent knowledge of government guidance, including 'Keeping children safe in education.' The robust recruitment process also ensures that candidates have the right values and attitudes.

Staff receive training on a wide range of safeguarding topics and have a good understanding of children's vulnerabilities. Weekly reviews of risks for each individual child ensures that any potential risks are captured early and responded with a multi-disciplinary approach. Proactive steps are taken swiftly to minimise the risks. Residential staff work well with other teams including school and therapists to understand behaviour. As a result, children have a positive experience when they stay.

Children spoken to say that they feel safe at the school and in the surrounding areas. Staff help them to understand risks and they know how to keep themselves safe. Staff talk to children about important topics such as online safety and respect of others. A local police officer has visited the residential provision to talk to children on how best to keep themselves safe in the community.

Positive behaviour is noticed and rewarded. Staff help children to develop self-control, resilience and an ability to learn new coping strategies. There have been no incidents requiring physical restraint and the staff see all behaviour as communication.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are ambitious and aspirational about what children can achieve. They are passionate about making a positive difference to children's lives. They have high expectations about the quality of care that residential staff provide to children. Leaders and managers ensure that all children have personalised learning goals and are coordinated across the school and residential provision. Above all, they are effective in helping children to achieve, to feel good about themselves and to make positive progress.

Some of the school's initiatives and emerging practices are innovative and their effectiveness makes worthy of a wider dissemination. For example, the school has championed the government initiative on 'hearing screening' in residential special schools. They have continued with the project after the government funding ended and work well with families and the community on hearing checks for children with complex sensory needs. Other examples relate to children participating in the

development of online application tools for visually impaired people with the aim of modifying the current technology and increasing accessibility. The aim is to improve the lifelong benefits for all children in the school and the wider community.

The head of the residential provision is part of the senior leadership team, and their oversight and scrutiny of the boarding provision are extremely thorough. Leaders have a strong understanding of the organisations strengths and weaknesses and work exceptionally well to build on the former and to address any gaps identified. Leaders champion a culture of learning and open communication between the teams. Staff say that they find the feedback beneficial and strive for continuous improvement. As a result, leaders have an exceptionally well-rounded view of the experiences of children and the impact that the care they receive is having on their outcomes.

Governors and the independent visitor add scrutiny to the school's already rigorous internal monitoring. They are highly experienced and knowledgeable in their areas of expertise relating to schools and hold the school's leaders and managers to account as well as acting as a critical friend. Governors visit the residential provision regularly and speak to children about their experiences. This is another example that shows that children and their experiences are at the centre of the school. Leaders use the independent visitor's reports to address any actions identified following their visits.

The school's highly developed systems, policies and procedures guide staff to achieve excellence in their work. Leaders and managers keep abreast of current research and best practice, and make sure that staff have up-to-date relevant knowledge. Leaders support staff very well and help them to develop further in their roles. For example, the school is completing a project to look at how best to support their children who have brain injuries. An expert in this area has visited the school to help staff understand the brain, including acquired brain injury and how it affects the development of the body.

Staff supervision and team meetings are used to good effect to ensure that staff have a sound understanding of children's needs. The exceptional training offer ensures that students are looked after by knowledgeable and well-informed staff.

Parents say that communication from managers and staff is 'excellent.' They receive frequent updates about children's progress through regular visits, telephone calls and daily logs that children take home with them. Parents who were initially anxious about their children attending the residential provision, now want to increase their children's days at the residential due to progress their children are making.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC010255

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Ms Sarah Norris & Monika Gaweda

Type of school: Residential Special School

Telephone number: 020 87880107

Email address: co-heads@lindenlodge.org.uk

Inspectors

Dorothy Thompstone, Social Care Inspector
Jo Tarbie, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2025