

# Ampleforth College

Ampleforth, York, North Yorkshire YO62 4ER

## Inspection dates

23–25 March 2021

### Overall outcome

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

### Boarding provision outcome

**The school does not meet all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a), 8, 8(a) and 8(b)*

- At the previous inspection in February 2021, inspectors found that the school's arrangements for safeguarding were hampered by confusing and overly complex systems, there were systemic weaknesses in recording and serious safeguarding concerns had not been referred to the appropriate bodies in a timely manner.
- At this inspection, inspectors found that leaders have recently introduced a welfare risk assessment for vulnerable pupils. This has addressed the confusion between risk assessments, safety plans and care plans that was evident at the last inspection. All staff who work with pupils have access to the information contained in these risk assessments. Staff have access to an overview of what information is kept in which database and which staff have access to the information.
- The designated safeguarding lead sends out safeguarding newsletters regularly to staff. These newsletters include information about anti-bullying, counselling, county lines, 'cuckooing', risk assessments, self-harm and mental health and well-being. This supplements the training on safeguarding attended by staff and the 'five-a-day' safeguarding quizzes that leaders organise.
- Leaders, including trustees, still do not know the full extent of poor recording and misreporting of safeguarding incidents over time. Five hundred and ninety-nine entries on the school's online data storage tool, relating to 213 pupils who have already left the school, have not been checked yet.
- Despite attending safeguarding training, the designated safeguarding lead and the deputy designated safeguarding leads, on occasion, do not recognise potential risks to pupils that require following up. Deputy designated leads triage cases when they occur. Some do not have the knowledge required to triage competently or confidently. Even

after triaging cases, potentially serious risks are not identified and followed up consistently well. During the inspection, the deputy safeguarding leads found it difficult to navigate the school's online data tool for recording and managing safeguarding concerns.

- During the recruitment of staff, candidates are asked safeguarding questions when they attend an interview at the school. However, this is not the case for volunteers who take up a role at the school. Leaders agreed to rectify this during the inspection so that there is consistency in their interview practice.
- When pupils leave the school and transfer to another school in England, staff ensure they take up the place at their new school. Staff do not routinely check that pupils are admitted to overseas schools in a similar manner. As a result, these pupils are not safeguarded to the same extent as pupils transferring to schools in England.
- Although some improvements have been made since the previous inspection in February 2021, weaknesses in the school's safeguarding practice remain. A culture of safeguarding is still not embedded. These standards remain unmet.

#### *Paragraph 7b*

- At the time of the last inspection, all adults, including trustees, monks who are teachers, and support staff, had an up-to-date knowledge of, and were acting in accordance with, the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (2020).
- Leaders have implemented a new safeguarding policy since the last inspection. The new policy refers to allegations against staff. The policy does not make explicit reference to the list of situations, as identified in paragraph 211 of 'Keeping children safe in education', when the allegations process should be followed.
- The designated safeguarding lead made changes to the school's new and published safeguarding policy during the inspection. However, some advice is incorrect, contradictory and unhelpful. For example, paragraph 10.2 states: 'Anyone can make a referral. Any such referral must be made immediately and in any event within 24 hours of you becoming aware of the risk.' Waiting 24 hours is not acceptable before making a referral to an appropriate body.
- Similarly, in the 'reporting a concern about a student' flow chart on page 14, the policy states that the designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding leads will 'review the concern and make a decision no later than 24 hours about the next steps'. Concerns must be dealt with immediately.
- The use of the words 'should' and 'must' is not consistent throughout the school's new safeguarding policy. On occasion, the policy states how staff should respond to a safeguarding issue and, at other points, how staff must respond to the same issue.
- Leaders did not know that they should inform the local authority when a pupil is removed from the school's roll in-year, in accordance with paragraph 4.25 of the DfE's 'The Independent School Standards – Guidance for independent schools (2019)'.
- This standard was met at the time of the last inspection but is now not met.

### *Paragraph 10*

- The DfE asked Ofsted to report on part 3, paragraph 10 during this inspection.
- The school has an anti-bullying policy in place. The policy is informed by statutory guidance. The school's logs show that bullying incidents are dealt with by staff quickly. Leaders promote anti-bullying overtly through the school's 'Christian living' curriculum. Current projects, such as work on 'toxic' masculinity, are evidence of leaders' efforts. Pupils report low incidence of bullying. Furthermore, 123 from 140 staff respondents to Ofsted's online survey reported that the school deals with any cases of bullying effectively.
- This standard is met.

### *Paragraph 14*

- The DfE requested that Ofsted consider compliance with part 3, paragraph 14 during this inspection.
- Pupils are appropriately supervised during breaktimes and leisure time.
- There is an electronic system to record pupils' attendance in lessons. Vulnerable pupils' non-attendance is addressed within 15 minutes. Other pupils' non-attendance is not addressed until they have missed an entire lesson and failed to turn up for the next lesson. This means that sometimes staff do not know where some pupils are or that they are safe.
- This standard is not met.

### *Paragraph 15*

- The admissions and attendance registers are kept on a management information system and meet the requirements relating to the keeping of admissions and attendance registers. Administrative errors on the school's admissions register were resolved during the inspection. The school informs North Yorkshire local authority when a pupil is added to the school's roll.
- This standard is met.

### *Paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16 (b)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, staff were unsure when to use safety plans, care plans and risk assessments. There was no consistent practice.
- Leaders have updated the risk assessment policy since the last inspection. There is now a consistent method of recording risk assessments on one agreed template.
- The risk assessment policy now includes vaping and smoking. These were missing from the policy at the time of the previous inspection. A risk assessment was written, in the week prior to this inspection, to address the safeguarding risks arising from the presence of non-staff adults in the boarding premises.
- There was a near-miss road traffic accident on site in early March 2021. The driver was a visitor to the school who was not accompanied by a member of the school's staff. Just last week, a further serious safeguarding incident, relating to an unaccompanied visitor to the site, occurred. This second incident demonstrates that the school's risk assessment policy and procedures are not applied consistently. Leaders' actions to mitigate risks to pupils are not effective. A secure culture of safeguarding is not embedded in all aspects of the school's work.

- These standards remain unmet.

#### Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

*Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f), 18(3), 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(2)(e), 19(3), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b)*

- Safer recruitment checks continue to be carried out well, following statutory guidance. The school's single central register of recruitment checks is compliant with the government's requirements.
- The standards in this part were met at the time of the last inspection and continue to be met.

#### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

*Paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c) and 34(2)*

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher, alongside the designated safeguarding lead, has started to attend meetings with North Yorkshire Safeguarding Partnership, the local authority's safeguarding partnership, regularly.
- Parents remain supportive of the school's leadership. The statement 'I can't imagine that there is a safer school in the country at the moment' is a typical response to Ofsted's most recent survey of parents' and carers' views.
- An external agency continues to support leaders to fulfil their statutory safeguarding duties. The agency has completed a review of the school's counselling records. The counselling chronologies on the school's online data storage tool are incomplete. The chief executive officer of the agency told inspectors that the school's expertise in keeping pupils safe is improving.
- Many of the actions in the external agency's rapid improvement plan have been addressed. The trustee with oversight of safeguarding, who is carrying out some operational tasks in addition to strategic responsibilities currently, understands the need to develop a strategic plan to improve safeguarding further. The trustee told the inspectors that the next step for leaders is to develop such a strategic plan.
- Leaders recognise that the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) was weak in the past. The new learning hub is testament to leaders' commitment to improving provision. The coordinator for special educational needs is bringing about a sea-change in the provision. Training for staff in the provision for SEND is now given high priority in the school's staff training programme. Parents are happy that the additional charges for learning support ceased in October 2020.
- The St Laurence Education Trust and the Ampleforth Abbey Trust remain linked closely.
- The corporate and sole trustee of the Ampleforth Abbey Trust, the Ampleforth Abbey Trustees (a company limited by guarantee) is one of eleven members of the St Laurence Education Trust. The Ampleforth Abbey Trust met the financial losses of the St Laurence

Education Trust in the 2017–18 and 2018–19 financial years. The Ampleforth Abbey Trust owns the land the school's buildings sit on.

- The links between the abbey and the school are evident in the everyday life of the school. Some facilities, such as information technology, including telephony, continue to be shared between the abbey and the school. Up until mid-January, emails from the headteacher to all academic staff were also sent to some members of the monastic community. A dean, who resides in the monastery, is on the senior leadership team of the school. The dean ensures that the school's Benedictine ethos remains central to the school's leadership team.
- All but two trustees are connected to the school as past pupils, spouses of past pupils or parents of pupils. The chair of trustees identified the need for the inclusion of more trustees from an educational background who have no previous or current connections with the school. He identified rightly the benefits a more diverse board of trustees would bring to the school.
- In January 2021, in its first review of the school's safeguarding records, the external agency identified a number of recent cases of very serious child-on-child abuse. Subsequent to this, and to make sure all necessary actions have been taken, the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding leads have reviewed the online safeguarding records for every pupil who attends the school currently. Leaders plan to review the remaining online records of 213 former pupils by 3 July 2021. Trustees are not confident that they have a full knowledge of all child-on-child abuse that has taken place since the current online data storage tool for recording and managing safeguarding concerns was set up.
- On occasion, the words used in the school's written communications, both internal and external, about the events that have occurred recently, are insensitive and open to misinterpretation. The safeguarding trustee has challenged this practice and is supporting improvement.
- As reported at the time of the last inspection, the designated safeguarding lead, deputy designated safeguarding leads, and housemasters and housemistresses review current safeguarding concerns alongside information on pupils' attendance, issues at home or at school and pupils' emotional well-being on a weekly basis. Pupils' individual needs and difficulties are now discussed by the designated safeguarding lead, deputy designated safeguarding leads, housemasters and housemistresses every week. However, the impact of the actions they have undertaken for individual pupils is not considered and evaluated as a matter of course. This new system is not yet embedded. As yet, it is not having the full impact that was initially envisaged.
- Leaders uploaded a new safeguarding policy to the school's website this month. The new policy, like its predecessor, contains contradictions. This new policy did not go out for consultation to, and scrutiny by, the whole staff. The online version of the policy was amended by the school during this inspection, but the version number remains the same, version 1.0.
- Some staff are dissatisfied with the way that changes are managed. Comments in Ofsted's survey of staff include: 'there is not time in our busy days to read and embed the amount of new policies coming in'; 'too many policies in a short time frame and no time to actually read and embed them'; 'changes are made without consultation and often decisions are reactive rather than proactive'; and 'the chaotic organisation is

incredibly difficult to adhere to as a teacher/tutor who has to put these overwhelmingly complex protocols and procedures into practice’.

- Leaders have not yet demonstrated that they fulfil all of their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently and continually. Despite a raft of very recently introduced systems, structures and policies, the desired all-encompassing culture of safeguarding, underpinned by a recognition that a hyper-vigilance is necessary, is not demonstrably evident. Some distance has been travelled but a proactive safeguarding culture is not yet in place. Leaders’ intent is evident, but the school’s practice has flaws in it, as evidenced by lapses uncovered by inspectors.
- These standards remain unmet.

### The national minimum standards that were assessed during this inspection

#### *Standard 11.1*

- Senior staff recognise that pupils needed additional mental health support when returning to school after the home-schooling period. As a result, several pupils are taking on ambassador roles for mental health and welfare. The mental health and well-being mentors provide an additional layer of support for pupils. Mentors receive extensive training which prepares them well for the role. The training includes mental health awareness and safeguarding knowledge. It is too soon to measure the impact of this very recent support.
- The school has made some progress since the last inspection in implementing new safeguarding processes. School leaders, boarding, teaching and support staff have undertaken extensive safeguarding training. Senior staff understand and use statutory referral processes appropriately. School leaders have also worked closely with other safeguarding agencies and have taken on board their advice. As a result, staff’s knowledge and skills, together with the profile of safeguarding, have increased. However, on occasion, staff do not follow up disclosures made by vulnerable pupils promptly and effectively. Their practice still requires development.
- Leaders monitor pupils’ use of the internet on a weekly basis through analysing a forensic software report. During the inspection, inspectors identified that pupils’ searches about shootings in schools had not been followed up appropriately.
- Improvements to the oversight of the counselling provision ensure safety for pupils while preserving the confidentiality of the sessions. Clear referral processes and oversight from the designated safeguarding lead means that issues of a safeguarding nature are highlighted from the outset. The school’s case management system is used as a method of recording key information, without breaching confidentiality. This means that potential risks to pupils are known and action is taken.
- Despite some improvement, the standard in this part remains unmet.

#### *Standards 13.3 and 13.4*

- Pupils are well supported by staff in the boarding houses. Pupils feel able to report concerns to staff. Boarding staff continue to develop their knowledge and skills to educate the pupils about a wide range of safeguarding risks. The training staff complete includes reporting and recording of safeguarding concerns, alcohol awareness, providing mental health support, suicide, self-harm and online safety. However, staff do not safeguard pupils consistently, because learning from training is not yet fully embedded.

- The head of pastoral care has effective oversight of the boarding provision. He provides regular opportunities for all boarding staff and leaders to discuss strengths and areas for development. This results in changes being made to improve the boarding provision for pupils. This monitoring is augmented by the safeguarding and boarding trustees, who oversee the boarding provision actively. Their support and knowledge contribute to the designated safeguarding lead's understanding of safeguarding issues.
- The school's leadership team has implemented a range of new systems to improve their oversight of pupils' well-being. However, some management monitoring systems are not being used consistently. This reduces the effectiveness of senior leadership's oversight. This means that some risks that affect pupils' safety and well-being are not identified and acted on.
- The standards in this part remain unmet.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.



## School details

Unique reference number	121735
Social care unique reference number	SC007916
DfE registration number	815/6006
Inspection number	10183662

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of boarding 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 boarding schools.

Type of school	A boarding school with religious character
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	480
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	224
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	383
Proprietor	St Laurence Education Trust
Chair	Edward Sparrow
Headteacher	Robin Dyer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,374
Annual fees (boarders)	£36,486
Telephone number	01439 766000
Website	<a href="http://www.ampleforth.org.uk/college">www.ampleforth.org.uk/college</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@ampleforth.org.uk">head@ampleforth.org.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

## **Information about this school**

- The school is a Roman Catholic co-educational boarding and day school. It is situated within the grounds of the Benedictine Ampleforth Abbey. The main school building adjoins the abbey.
- The boarding provision consists of nine boarding houses on the Ampleforth site.
- The headteacher is on a fixed-term contract until December 2022.
- The school does not use alternative education provision.
- The school reopened to pupils on the 8 March 2021. Some pupils continue to be educated remotely.

## Information about this inspection

- This second monitoring inspection was carried out at the request of the DfE. The inspection took place thirty-one school days after the first monitoring inspection. Its purpose was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The lead inspector attempted to notify the school of the inspection 30 minutes before the inspection team arrived on site. Telephone calls went straight to a recorded message for Ampleforth Abbey and Ampleforth College. There was no facility to leave a recorded message.
- Ampleforth College was previously inspected by Ofsted on 3 to 5 February 2021 and 24 to 25 September 2020. These were emergency and progress monitoring inspections respectively, commissioned by the DfE. Prior to this, the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) carried out a progress monitoring inspection at Ampleforth College in January 2020. During this inspection, the school was found to meet all of the standards checked. The school's last ISI integrated inspection of the school and boarding provision was on 22 to 25 January 2013. The last regulatory compliance inspection was conducted by ISI on 7 to 8 March 2018.
- The DfE did not require the school to submit an action plan following the emergency inspection on 24 to 25 September 2020 or the progress monitoring inspection on 3 to 5 February 2021.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the chair of trustees and other trustees, including the trustee with oversight of safeguarding, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the designated safeguarding lead. They also spoke with other adults in school, including deputy designated safeguarding leads, teachers, housemasters and mistresses and support staff. In addition, inspectors met with the chief executive officer of an external agency supporting the school and a group of seven parents. Inspectors also met with groups of pupils. Some of these meetings took place face to face and others took place online.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of documents, including the school's rapid improvement plan, recruitment checks, the admissions register, welfare records and policies.
- The inspection team considered 80 additional parental responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, alongside 76 free-text submissions. In addition, inspectors took note of 254 pupils' responses and 149 staff's responses to Ofsted's surveys.
- Prior to the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the safeguarding unit manager from North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and a detective superintendent from North Yorkshire Police.

## Inspection team

Belita Scott, lead inspector

Senior Her Majesty's Inspector

Michele Costello

Her Majesty's Inspector

Patricia Head

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jamie Richardson

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Jane Titley

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection*

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
  - 8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

#### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.
- 34(2) For the purpose of paragraph (1)(c) “well-being” means well-being within the meaning of section 10(2) of the Children Act 2004.

*Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection*

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

**The school does not meet the following boarding schools national minimum standards**

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection*

**Standard 11 – Child protection**

11.1 The school ensures that:

- arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
- such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

**Standard 13 – Management and development of boarding**

13.3 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role.

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