

# Ampleforth College

Ampleforth, York, North Yorkshire YO62 4ER

## Inspection dates

24–25 September 2020

### 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

*Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 8, 8(a), 8(b)*

- Leaders have not taken precise enough account of the longstanding historical safeguarding failings at Ampleforth College in their current practice. Despite improvements in the last year, leaders do not take all reasonable, timely and appropriate action to safeguard pupils. They have not established a well embedded safeguarding culture in the school.
- The headteacher since his appointment has brought improvements to the school's internal safeguarding arrangements. However, other leaders do not always share essential information so that he has full strategic oversight of potential risks at the school and how those risks are being mitigated. When this occurs, information is not shared or used effectively between leaders to inform vital and urgent decisions.
- Leaders do not have a thorough understanding of statutory guidance and have not followed this guidance well enough. For example, although safeguarding leaders do seek the advice of different local authority services, they are often too reliant on this advice, without a sure enough understanding about their wider statutory responsibilities. There are serious weaknesses in the way leaders make safeguarding referrals to statutory agencies and manage allegations.
- Leaders and governors feel that they have established a robust governance mechanism that takes all appropriate and reasonable action to safeguard pupils. This is not borne out by inspection evidence.
  - Evidence shows that when governance has powers to act swiftly to prioritise the welfare of pupils in potentially risky situations, they do not routinely use this.

- Appropriate school leaders are not always present when essential decisions are made regarding adults who access the co-located site and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Concerns raised by the local authority safeguarding teams and police are not always given sufficient consideration in the decisions that are made.
- Some leaders indicated to inspectors that they feel unable to act with complete independence from the Abbey when making safeguarding decisions.
- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy that has due regard to the latest statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020*. The school has published the policy on its website. This is readily available to parents and carers. However, the policy is not being effectively implemented.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know whom to report any concerns to. The school has recently implemented an online system that pupils can use to email any concerns that they have. Pupils have not used this new system to raise any concerns.
- These standards are not met.

*Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10*

- Leaders have reviewed and improved the school's behaviour policy. Pupils understand what is expected of them. They appreciate the rewards they receive for their good behaviour. Sanctions are in place for poor behaviour. These are recorded appropriately. Pupils see the sanctions as a deterrent, particularly suspension. Leaders have taken action to reduce behavioural issues related to alcohol and vaping or smoking.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They are courteous and polite. Pupils are self-disciplined. In study periods, they are supervised and work on a variety of tasks that supplement their activities in lessons.
- The anti-bullying policy is currently under review. It is clear from the work so far that leaders are carefully considering how this can be made fully effective. Leaders log and deal with bullying incidents. However, record keeping does not demonstrate that actions have led to a reduction in bullying incidents.
- These standards have been met.

*Paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16(a), 16(b)*

- The school site is generally well maintained. A premises team deals with any issues involving health and safety or site maintenance. Staff report any issues relating to repairs that are needed, and these are usually acted upon quickly.
- Leaders ensure regular testing and checking of fire-fighting equipment in school buildings. Emergency lighting and fire alarms are checked, and pupils take part in regular fire drills. The school's fire risk assessment is reviewed annually. Contractors service fire extinguishers regularly to keep them in good working order. Fire signage is in place to direct people out of buildings and all fire exits are kept clear.
- The school maintains admission and attendance registers in accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidelines.

- Pupils are supervised appropriately in school, including during breaktimes.
- The school has a comprehensive first-aid policy that is regularly reviewed. Risk assessments for pupils' activities, such as science investigations, identify risks and include appropriate control measures to reduce accidents.
- These standards have been met.

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

*Paragraphs 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), 21(7)(b)*

- The school maintains an appropriate single central register.
- Leaders ensure that all appropriate employment checks are made on the suitability of staff, volunteers and trustees. The school follows up any gaps in applicants' records to ascertain a full history of their past employment. References are always collected from the applicant's current or most recent employer.
- All of the standards in this part are met.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2), 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b), 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b), 30*

- The school provides suitable and ample accommodation for the number of pupils and staff. Lighting and acoustics are appropriate. Pupils have access to a range of buildings with specialist facilities, including a theatre, an art block and science laboratories. Generally, buildings are in a good state of repair. Toilet facilities are suitable, with the exception of the temperature of the hot water in some sinks.
- The school grounds are vast. Pupils enjoy a large variety of spaces where they can play and socialise. Facilities for physical education are of a high standard, including several rugby pitches, a cricket pavilion, gymnasium and swimming pool. The school has recently erected a three-bar wooden fence to delineate the border between the school's grounds and those of the abbey.
- The school has its own infirmary, which is used to meet the medical needs of pupils. It is well furnished with a medical room for the examination and treatment of pupils. Pupils have access to a doctor and several nurses. First-aid kits are well stocked and the contents are within date. The school has the facility to store medicines that need to be kept cool in a lockable medicine cabinet.

- External lighting is in place over the campus. Lights are a mixture of those activated by a motion sensor and those that come on when it gets dark. These ensure that pupils can move safely around the site.
- These standards are met.

*Paragraphs 28(1), 28 (1)(d)*

- The temperature of water for handwashing in the school toilets and science laboratory sinks was unsuitable. In some facilities, the hot water tap did not run warm and in others the hot water posed a scalding risk to users. Premises staff attempted to rectify this during the inspection, but were unsuccessful.
- These standards are not met.

#### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

*Paragraphs 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)*

- The school makes the complaints procedure available to parents through its online parent portal. The policy coherently sets out the school's sequential approach to managing a complaint through to a resolution. Appropriate timelines and the option to move to a panel hearing are built into the procedure. Leaders have recently tightened up the procedure to ensure that complaints are dealt with more effectively.
- These standards are met.

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

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

*National minimum standards 11, 13.5*

- There are significant failures to take all reasonable action to assess, review and mitigate the risks posed to pupils by the specific context of the school. In this way, leaders are not proactively ensuring the wellbeing of pupils.
- Despite recent improvements by the headteacher, leaders and governors have not used the precise learning from previous failings to secure robust and confident current practice among leaders and governors. The culture of safeguarding, although improving, does not always consider the safeguarding of pupils above all else.
- Leaders are failing to ensure that the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools are met consistently and securely.
- The standards in this part are unmet.

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

*Standards 2.3, 4, 5, 6*

- Staff provide children with helplines and details of those whom they can contact for guidance and advice outside school. Children are aware of the support available to them. In one house, details of the Children's Commissioner were not displayed. This was rectified immediately during the inspection. Children feel confident to talk to staff and they know how to make a complaint.

- Children are permitted to use mobile phones to contact their family and friends. They are able to make contact when this suits them, around their timetable of learning.
- Boarding accommodation is appropriate. Boarders personalise areas of their accommodation to suit their tastes. In one house, some bedrooms look tired and are in need of redecoration. Leaders have plans to refurbish this house. Inspectors found a few instances where children were not able to lock their toilet door. This was rectified immediately during the inspection.
- External closed-circuit television (CCTV) is installed outside boarding accommodation and is used for security purposes. This poses no intrusion. At the time of the inspection, there was no registration with the Information Commissioner's Office. This was rectified during the inspection.
- Communal areas in homes provide space for children to enjoy recreational time. These are separated for use only by children in the same year group, to minimise the risks associated with the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak. Children are aware of processes in place to help them to stay healthy.
- Leaders routinely carry out health and safety checks in the boarding houses, including fire drills. This helps to keep children safe when boarding.
- These standards are met.

*Standards 10.1, 10.2*

- Boarders have access to a good range of outdoor pursuits to participate in during free time. This includes horse riding, rugby, golf, music and theatre. Suitable risk assessments are in place for these activities.
- Boarders have the option to use recreational areas indoors and outdoors where they can be alone if they wish. Boarding houses have their own gardens with seating areas.
- These standards are met.

*Standards 13 (except 13.5), 14, 15, 17.1, 18*

- When safeguarding incidents occur in boarding houses, safeguarding leaders follow the school's protocols. Children report feeling safe in boarding houses and know they can report concerns to staff.
- Effective links between boarding and school staff mean that concerns that arise in school are communicated effectively to boarding staff. Boarding and house matrons work together to monitor and support the children.
- The boarding leaders demonstrate good management skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. The boarding leaders are overseen by the head housemaster and they receive regular support and oversight through weekly meetings. The staff have annual appraisals.
- Leaders ensure that staff recruitment meets the requirements of DfE guidance. Leaders verify references and undertake any necessary overseas checks. Gaps in employment history are explored. Volunteers are not used in the boarding houses. Information provided indicates that if this were to happen, full checks would be carried out. The recruitment process means that children in the boarding houses are not placed at risk from unsuitable members of staff.

- Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute their views to the running of their boarding house. Staff ask children to complete surveys at regular intervals to gain their views about boarding arrangements. Boarders know how to make a complaint, and all reported that they feel able to do so if they have a concern.
- The school's complaints policy is used for complaints made about boarding provision. The school keeps a log of any complaints made. Complaints about the boarding provision are not separated from the complaints about the wider school but are identified in the detail of the complaint.
- These standards are met.

*Standards 11 and 13.5*

- As already identified in Part 3, Paragraph 7 of this report, failings in the leadership and governance of safeguarding across the school also impact negatively on their ability to safeguarding pupils who are boarding, despite some of the good other work that leaders and staff do.
- These standards are 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. 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	10164726

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 a 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	488
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	230
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	392
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/school">www.ampleforth.org.uk/school</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headmaster@ampleforth.org.uk">headmaster@ampleforth.org.uk</a>



## **Information about this school**

- Ampleforth College was last inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) in January 2020. This was a progress monitoring inspection. It was found to meet all the standards checked. The school's last ISI integrated inspection was on 22–25 January 2013. The last regulatory compliance inspection was conducted by ISI on 7–8 March 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The current headteacher is on a fixed-term contract until December 2022.
- 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.

## Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was carried out at the request of the DfE. The school was notified of the inspection approximately 20 minutes before inspectors arrived on site. The DfE asked inspectors to find out whether suitable arrangements are in place at the school to safeguard pupils and boarders. This is because the DfE has ongoing concerns about whether the school continues to meet some of the independent school standards, particularly in relation to pupils' health, safety and welfare. The DfE also asked inspectors to look at the school premises and accommodation, and the complaints procedure.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the school's designated safeguarding lead. They also spoke with other members of staff, including those responsible for the premises and a deputy designated safeguarding lead. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors examined safeguarding arrangements by reviewing safeguarding records, checking the safety of the school site, talking to staff and pupils about how they keep safe, and checking the school's single central register. Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke to North Yorkshire local authority officers about safeguarding arrangements at the school. Inspectors conducted a tour of the site.
- Inspectors looked at the school's complaints process and associated documentation. They also examined records relating to behaviour, bullying, and health and safety.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

## Inspection team

Tim Hill, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Belita Scott	Senior Her Majesty's Inspector
Debbie Redshaw	Senior Her Majesty's Inspector
Jamie Richardson	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Jane Titley	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Paula Kelly	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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

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

#### **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; and
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act[11] 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.

#### **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

#### **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.

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

#### **■ Standard 11 – Child protection**

- 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 (NMS 11.1)

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

- The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the wellbeing of pupils (NMS 13.5).

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