

School inspection report

15 to 17 September 2026

Ampleforth College

Ampleforth

York

YO62 4ER

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders promote the school's Catholic educational ethos, creating a sense of community and shared purpose. Governors provide effective oversight of the school and scrutiny of leaders' decision-making. Leaders have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities and ensure that the Standards are met consistently. As a result, pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted within a welcoming and inclusive community.
2. Leaders promote a broad and balanced curriculum, which is adapted to provide appropriate pathways for all pupils. Teachers use a range of assessment information to monitor attainment and progress and identify where additional support is required. Targeted and supportive academic actions to support preparation for examinations contributes to improved GCSE outcomes.
3. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and build effectively on pupils' prior learning. They use questioning and feedback to check understanding and support pupils to make progress. However, in some lessons, staff do not consistently implement strategies that take sufficient account of pupils' different starting points and needs.
4. Leaders promote pupils' physical, mental and emotional wellbeing effectively. The house system, underpinned by the school's Benedictine values, helps pupils to develop positive relationships, reflect on their behaviour and understand how their actions may affect others. Pupils show respect and consideration for one another and are confident in seeking support from trusted adults when they need it.
5. Leaders manage risk effectively across the school site, including the Ampleforth Abbey grounds, boarding houses and specialist teaching facilities. Risk assessments are systematic, and comprehensive measures are taken to mitigate identified risks associated with educational visits, sporting activities and other aspects of school life. This enables pupils to participate securely and responsibly in the broad range of opportunities available to them.
6. Leaders ensure that boarding is well organised and makes a positive contribution to boarders' wellbeing and personal development. Boarding houses provide a welcoming environment. Accommodation is comfortable, secure and well supervised. Effective pastoral and medical support ensures that boarders' individual needs are supported well. Boarding arrangements meet the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools (NMS).
7. Leaders prepare pupils effectively for life in modern British society and for their future education and employment. Comprehensive and impartial careers guidance, including individualised advice, helps pupils to understand the range of academic, vocational and professional pathways available to them. As a result, pupils develop an understanding of different careers and further education opportunities so that they can make informed choices about their next steps.
8. Robust safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively. Leaders maintain close working relationships with external agencies and review safeguarding information carefully to identify concerns and provide appropriate support for pupils. The school's site and boarding houses are managed securely, including clear access arrangements and a visible and vigilant security presence. Pupils know how to report concerns and are confident in seeking help from trusted adults, if required.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that teaching strategies meet the needs of all pupils so that they make consistently good progress.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders implement comprehensive policies and procedures and ensure that these reflect statutory guidance. They monitor the effectiveness of their work systematically and use self-evaluation to identify priorities for improvement. This evaluation informs school development planning, including the current focus on teaching and learning, which supports the progress of all pupils.
10. Governors provide support and challenge to leaders, drawing effectively on their professional expertise. Governors review safeguarding procedures and safeguarding documentation, including low-level concerns, and consult directly with pupils to evaluate their positive emotional wellbeing. Governors ensure that leaders have the skills, resources and knowledge required to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. The oversight provided by governors ensures that leaders respond effectively to the school's changing needs and consistently promote pupils' wellbeing.
11. Leaders and governors communicate and promote the school's Benedictine mission and values effectively. The emphasis on respect, service, responsibility and care for others is understood across the school community and is evident in pupils' everyday conduct and relationships. These values shape leaders' decision-making and the school's consistent focus on developing the whole person, contributing to pupils' sense of belonging and responsibility towards others.
12. Leaders ensure that the required policies and information are made available to parents of current and prospective pupils. Parents receive regular written reports about their child's progress and attainment, including guidance about how they can improve their work. Leaders provide the local authority with the required information when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.
13. Leaders maintain effective relationships with local safeguarding partners and other external agencies, seeking advice and support when required. They draw on this professional expertise to enhance staff knowledge and practice, using safeguarding professionals to deliver training to staff. This ongoing engagement supports leaders and staff in responding appropriately to concerns and helps to develop the secure knowledge and skills required to promote pupils' security and wellbeing effectively.
14. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and implement an appropriate accessibility plan. Financial information concerning pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) is provided to local authorities as required. Leaders promote inclusion through targeted support and reasonable adjustments, including for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
15. Leaders implement effective procedures to identify, assess and manage risk across the school and boarding provision. Risk assessments address the particular risks associated with boarding, the school site, recreational activities and educational visits. Staff receive appropriate training and guidance to manage any potential risks, which supports pupils' suitable and well-managed participation in school and boarding life.
16. Leaders and governors maintain effective oversight of boarding, which is an integral part of the school. During regular visits and engagement with boarders and staff, leaders evaluate the quality of the school's boarding provision. Clear routines, effective supervision and a well-planned programme

of activities create a supportive boarding community that promotes boarders' wellbeing and personal development effectively and consistently.

17. Leaders implement the school's complaints procedure appropriately and maintain suitable records of concerns and complaints. Leaders and governors review complaints reflectively, which informs their effective management of any informal and formal complaints that are submitted. Any stage-three complaints are considered by a suitably constituted and independent panel.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. The school implements a broad curriculum designed to support pupils' academic achievement and personal development. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study a range of subjects across the humanities, sciences, languages, creative arts and physical education (PE). The curriculum places an emphasis on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and oracy. As pupils progress through the school, they choose from a range of academic pathways and qualifications. The breadth of subjects available at GCSE, such as enterprise and marketing, computer science and classical civilisation, followed by A levels and the BTEC National Diploma in the sixth form, enables pupils to follow pathways suited to their individual interests and aspirations.
19. Teaching is typically effective, supported by teachers' secure subject knowledge and positive relationships with pupils. Teachers help pupils to build on their prior learning by asking probing questions to check their understanding and by selecting a range of resources that promote independent thinking. For example, in English lessons, carefully designed resources enable pupils to access challenging concepts and develop their analysis of literature. Leaders recognise the need to adapt teaching approaches to support pupils who join the school, including those who arrive from a wide range of international backgrounds. However, the effectiveness of teaching varies across the school. In lessons, teaching does not consistently take sufficient account of pupils' different starting points and individual needs.
20. Pupils are engaged in lessons and apply intellectual and creative effort to their learning. In mathematics, for instance, pupils work collaboratively, discuss approaches and contribute to alternative problem-solving solutions. In creative subjects, pupils experiment with different techniques and materials, which develops their confidence in expressing and refining their own ideas. In science and technology lessons, pupils undertake detailed research and independently refine their ideas as projects develop. As a result, pupils show academic initiative and develop a wide range of skills that supports their learning across the curriculum.
21. Leaders implement an effective assessment framework that enables teachers to monitor pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers use questioning and verbal feedback in lessons to check pupils' understanding and to inform their subsequent lesson planning and teaching. Leaders analyse assessment information to identify pupils who require additional academic support and those who would benefit from additional challenge, including their participation in the 'scholars' programme'.
22. Provision for pupils who have SEND is effective. Staff receive appropriate information and training to ensure that they develop a secure understanding of pupils' individual needs. Teachers use a range of appropriate teaching strategies, such as paired and group work, to enable pupils to access the curriculum. Pupils receive additional support and help through the well-managed 'learning hub'. As a result, pupils who have SEND learn and achieve well and make good progress during their time at the school.
23. Pupils who speak EAL receive effective support that reflects their individual needs and intended pathways. Assessment prior to, and following, entry to the school enables staff to identify pupils' language needs. Leaders provide staff with specific training so that they develop the skills and understanding to teach pupils who speak EAL effectively. Pupils receive targeted and appropriate language and communication support that enables them to use written and spoken English competently and confidently.

24. The school provides an extensive programme of recreational activities. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF), The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and country sports, such as gamekeeping and clay shooting, enable pupils to develop practical skills, independence and teamwork. Participation in drama productions and musicals encourages pupils to challenge themselves, develop confidence and work collaboratively. Pupils who sing in the 'Schola Cantorum' develop their musical skills through performing at Mass in the Abbey and contribute to the spiritual and communal life of the school. These experiences enable pupils to develop new skills and promote their sense of belonging to the school community.
25. Boarders benefit from a varied programme of recreational activities, which supports their wellbeing and social development. After-school, evening and weekend activities include sport, music, creative activities and baking, alongside a range of well-planned house events and trips. Structured prep sessions provide boarders with quiet, supervised time for academic study and access to support when needed, enabling them to develop effective study habits. Daily reading encourages reading for pleasure and shared activities help boarders to develop positive relationships within their houses. Opportunities for day pupils to join events held during evenings encourage pupils to form inclusive and positive relationships throughout the school.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

26. Pupils' spiritual and moral development reflects the school's Catholic educational mission and Benedictine values. Pupils participate actively in the Christian community through prayers, Mass and worship in the Abbey and house chapels. Pupils volunteer to be readers in chapel and assist with Holy Communion. They are encouraged to reflect on themes such as kindness, their respectful use of language and their responsibilities towards others. As a result, pupils develop a secure understanding of their spirituality and the importance of demonstrating moral responsibility towards others.
27. Staff teach a suitable personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum, principally through the school's own 'Christian living' programme. The programme is carefully adapted to pupils' ages and needs and develops their understanding of healthy relationships, consent, the dangers of drugs and alcohol misuse, and living a balanced lifestyle. Teachers initiate discussions and ask appropriate questions that encourage pupils to reflect on relevant issues. Pupils develop the self-confidence and understanding to manage relationships and social situations appropriately and to make informed decisions that support their physical and emotional wellbeing.
28. Leaders promote pupils' physical wellbeing through a programme of sport and PE. Pupils participate in a broad range of activities, including hockey, netball, rugby and cricket. Leaders instigate partnerships with regional sporting academies that provide further opportunities for pupils with higher prior skills to enhance their sporting abilities. Games afternoons enable pupils of all sporting abilities to participate in a range of PE opportunities and activities, including representing the school in competitive fixtures. Regular participation in physical activity helps pupils to understand its benefits for their physical and mental health and to develop positive attitudes towards competition and teamwork.
29. Leaders ensure that the relationships and sex education (RSE) programme is carefully planned to meet pupils' developmental needs and statutory requirements. Leaders consult openly with parents and review the programme to ensure that its content remains relevant to pupils. Senior pupils take part in training to become healthy relationship ambassadors and assist staff by helping to provide guidance and support to their peers. Pupils discuss potentially harmful behaviours in lessons to help them develop their self-knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions.
30. The school's ethos contributes to a well-established culture in which pupils treat one another with respect and consideration. This is evident in houses, at shared mealtimes and during pupils' free time, when pupils of different ages meet and develop supportive relationships with each other and with staff. Leaders reinforce clear expectations for behaviour and pupils understand the school's rewards and sanctions procedures. They help pupils to understand how to use their mobile phones responsibly and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment during the school day, which supports their focus on learning.
31. The school's anti-bullying strategy is effective. Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and know how to report concerns to staff, who respond appropriately and take action to prevent recurrence. Staff encourage pupils to consider how their actions affect others and to resolve difficulties appropriately and amicably. As a result, any occasional concerns about bullying are identified and

addressed appropriately and pupils form respectful relationships that characterise their interactions across school and boarding life.

32. Leaders implement effective health and safety and fire safety arrangements and maintain suitable premises and accommodation so that pupils learn and board in an environment that is secure, clean and well maintained. They ensure that all required checks and servicing are carried out, including on fire safety equipment and transport. Fire evacuation drills are conducted regularly, including during boarding hours, and an up-to-date fire risk assessment is in place.
33. The school's boarding provision promotes pupils' wellbeing and personal development. The boarding houses are welcoming communities where pupils of different ages develop supportive relationships. Clear and established boarding routines and appropriate supervision help boarders to feel secure and included. Boarders have appropriate opportunities to hold positions of responsibility and to share their views about boarding life.
34. First aid arrangements support pupils' health and wellbeing effectively. Appropriately trained staff provide timely care and maintain secure storage and clear systems for administering and recording medication so that pupils' medical needs are managed competently. Staff understand the procedures for responding to medical needs during trips, sports fixtures and emergencies, enabling pupils to receive appropriate support when required. Leaders and staff ensure that boarders' first aid and medical needs are supported effectively.
35. Pupils are supervised effectively throughout the school, including during educational visits and activities. A suitable number of staff supervise boarders during evenings and weekends and residential staff are available throughout the night should pupils require support. The school and grounds are managed securely, with clear boundaries and a visible security presence. Security staff monitor access to the site and effective visitor procedures ensure that those entering the school are appropriately checked and managed.
36. Boarding accommodation is maintained to a high standard and provides a comfortable, homely environment. Boarding houses provide suitable spaces for study, relaxation and socialising, and boarders have secure facilities for their personal belongings. Shared mealtimes and informal contact with house staff contribute to the positive relationships that routinely characterise boarding life. Leaders cater for boarders' individual dietary requirements and provide them with food and drinks outside normal mealtimes.
37. Admission, registration and attendance procedures are effective and implemented securely. Day pupils are registered when they arrive in their boarding houses, which enables staff to maintain an accurate record of all pupils on site. Attendance registers are recorded accurately and in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders monitor attendance carefully, communicating with pupils and parents when any concerns arise.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

38. The school's Benedictine values shape the school's culture of respect and inclusion. Pupils learn the importance of listening to and understanding others, including those from different cultures and beliefs. The school welcomes pupils from a wide range of countries, with new international boarders joining each year. Living and learning alongside pupils from different cultural backgrounds develops pupils' understanding of different perspectives and cultures. The 'deanery' system within houses brings pupils of different ages and backgrounds together to take part in shared activities, developing their understanding of the importance of respecting others. As a result, pupils contribute to, and share, a school community that is welcoming and inclusive.
39. Pupils develop an understanding of their responsibility towards others and the wider world. The school's 'live simply' programme supports pupils to consider how small changes can have a positive impact on themselves, others and the environment. Initiatives such as 'simpler lunches' reduce the school's carbon footprint and help pupils to understand sustainability, appreciate what they have and consider how their actions may affect others.
40. Leaders actively promote British values within the curriculum and during assemblies. The curriculum is structured so that pupils, including those who join the school at different stages and from different countries, develop their understanding of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect. Participation in Model United Nations and the debating society enables pupils to consider different viewpoints, construct reasoned arguments and debate complex national and global issues. Leaders ensure that political issues are presented in a balanced way, enabling pupils to consider contrasting perspectives and reach their own informed conclusions. These experiences develop pupils' understanding of democratic principles and the importance of engaging constructively with views that differ from their own.
41. Leaders promote pupils' understanding of right from wrong, respect for the law and responsibility for their own actions. Pupils sign the school's code of conduct at the start of the academic year, and the school's high behavioural expectations are reinforced through clear daily routines and reminders. Pupils support one another in their houses, treat their peers respectfully in lessons and take responsibility for communal spaces. As a result, pupils behave with maturity and show consideration for others.
42. Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop leadership skills and contribute to the school community. Senior pupils apply for prefect positions and receive training in leadership, teamwork and public speaking before taking up their responsibilities. Other positions, such as house monitors, and leadership roles in sport, the CCF and music, enable pupils to represent others and organise activities. As a result, pupils develop self-confidence and leadership skills and understand the value of using their responsibilities to make a positive contribution to their community.
43. Pupils receive careers education and guidance that prepares them effectively for future education and employment. A structured programme introduces pupils to different career pathways and further education opportunities. Pupils benefit from personalised guidance and careers interviews to explore their personal interests and aspirations. Discussions with employers and universities broaden pupils' understanding of academic and vocational routes, including apprenticeships and

degree apprenticeships. As a result, pupils understand the range of opportunities available to them, and the qualifications and skills required for the pathways they choose.

44. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community through a programme of service, volunteering and charitable activities that reflect the school's Catholic educational mission. House and year-group initiatives encourage pupils to raise funds and support local and international charities. Pupils also volunteer in the local community, such as when they contribute to environmental projects and provide support for organisations that help vulnerable people. Pupils demonstrate a high level of participation in such initiatives, which helps them to develop a commitment to service and charitable work.
45. Pupils develop their economic and financial understanding progressively as they move through the school. Practical experiences for younger pupils, such as managing spending in the house tuck shop and planning budgets for social events, enable pupils to make informed decisions about the use of money. Pupils in Year 12 develop their understanding of personal finance, banking and taxation, which extends to budgeting for independent living, student finance and loans in Year 13. Pupils develop the financial knowledge and practical skills they need to make informed decisions and prepare for greater financial independence.

Safeguarding

46. Leaders ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive, routinely updated and reflect current statutory requirements. Governors maintain effective oversight through their regular engagement with safeguarding leaders, conducting detailed and thorough audits and checking safeguarding documentation, including scrutiny of any low-level concerns relating to adults who work at the school. Leaders and governors work closely to identify, and respond appropriately to, any emerging safeguarding patterns and trends.
47. Leaders establish a vigilant safeguarding culture. Staff receive appropriate training at induction and regular updates throughout the year. Training covers relevant safeguarding risks and responsibilities, such as child-on-child abuse, attendance, healthy relationships and developing resilience, alongside the school's procedures for managing pupils' use of mobile phones. Safeguarding leaders undertake appropriate training for their roles and maintain links with the local authority to keep their knowledge and practice up to date. Regular review of safeguarding information enables the safeguarding team to identify vulnerable pupils, evaluate concerns and assess the effectiveness of the actions they take.
48. Leaders maintain effective relationships with the local authority and other external agencies and show a secure understanding of local referral thresholds and procedures. They seek advice and make referrals promptly when concerns require external support. Safeguarding records are detailed, stored securely and reviewed carefully. This enables leaders to maintain effective oversight of individual concerns and ensure that pupils receive appropriate and timely support.
49. Leaders implement effective internet filtering and monitoring arrangements and review these regularly to identify and respond to potential online safeguarding risks. Safeguarding leaders act promptly when any inappropriate online activity is identified. The PSHE programme develops pupils' understanding of online safety and how to manage risks, so that pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online and where to seek help if they have concerns about any suspicious internet activity.
50. Pupils are encouraged to seek support, and they understand how to access help when needed. Leaders make appropriate arrangements so that pupils have access to leaders and staff, including those with safeguarding responsibilities and residential house staff. Pupils understand the school's reporting system, which enables them to share concerns anonymously.
51. Boarding houses are secure and appropriate safeguarding protocols are understood by residential staff, who actively promote the importance of boarders sharing any concerns they may have with trusted adults. Leaders ensure that boarders have access to a suitable independent person and know how to make contact, if required.
52. The school maintains rigorous safer recruitment procedures to help ensure that suitable adults work with pupils. All pre-employment checks are completed for staff, governors, volunteers and contractors before they begin working at the school. These checks are recorded accurately on a suitable single central record of appointments (SCR), which is subject to regular and thorough monitoring by leaders and governors.

School details

School	Ampleforth College
Department for Education number	815/6006
Registered charity number	1063808
Address	Ampleforth College Ampleforth York North Yorkshire YO62 4ER
Phone number	01439 766000
Email address	reception@ampleforth.org.uk
Website	www.ampleforthcollege.org.uk
Proprietor	St Laurence Education Trust
Chair	Mr Edmund Craston
Headteacher	Mr Jon Mutton
Age range	11 to 19
Number of pupils	381
Number of boarding pupils	258
Date of previous inspection	27 to 29 September 2023

Information about the school

53. Ampleforth College is a Roman Catholic independent co-educational boarding and day school situated in North Yorkshire. The school is administered as an independent charitable trust by a board of lay governors. In October 2018, St Laurence Education Trust signed an agreement confirming its full independence from the Ampleforth Abbey Trust. The main school building adjoins the Benedictine Ampleforth Abbey, but the grounds are separated from the abbey by a boundary wall and fence. The headteacher took up his position in January 2025 and the chair of governors was appointed in June 2025.
54. Boarders are accommodated in seven boarding houses, which are situated on the school's site. These comprise four boarding houses for male pupils and three boarding houses for female pupils. In addition, the school's provision also includes a co-educational junior boarding house for pupils in Years 7 to 8. The school offers boarding for pupils from the age of 11 years.
55. The school has identified 85 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
56. The school has identified English as an additional language for 66 pupils.
57. The school states that its aims are to provide an Ampleforth education that is an invitation to young people to discover the value and the purpose of life. It seeks that pupils enter into a transforming encounter with Christ through active participation in the life of a living Christian community.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

15 to 17 September 2026

58. A team of 6 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The on-site inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

59. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work including with staff and pupils
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

60. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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For more information, please visit isi.net