



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for

# Ampleforth College

URN: 121735  
DfE no: 815/6006

Carried out on behalf of the **Right Rev. Terence Patrick Drainey, Bishop of Middlesbrough** by kind permission of St Laurence Education Trust on:

**Date: 15 & 16 November 2023**

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
Catholic life and mission (p.3) How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....	1
Religious education (p.5) The quality of curriculum religious education.....	1
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	1
The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	✓
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	✓
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

## Summary of key findings

### What the school does well

- The Ampleforth community is one in which all staff are admirable role models for the students in their care. Students recognise and appreciate this; it impacts on the way they live their lives.
- The pastoral care offered by the college is outstanding. Chaplaincy provision is vibrant and thoughtful; it is tailored to suit the individual student.
- Centrality of prayer and worship to the life of the college is exceptional. All members of the community are fully immersed in the prayer life of the school, which is often led by students.

- Summative assessment monitoring systems within the religious education department, known as Christian theology at Ampleforth, are a strength of the department's work. As a consequence, departmental staff use this to inform future planning and further develop student understanding.
- A-level outcomes in religious education are outstanding and strength of the department and the college as a whole.

What the school needs to improve:

- Leaders must ensure appropriate planning and sequencing of the *Religious Education Directory*.
- Leaders need to strengthen formative assessment systems within the Christian theology department by ensuring consistency across the department.
- Departmental staff need to work with some students to improve the presentation of their work so that written work reflects the pride students show for the subject.

## Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....	<div style="border: 2px solid purple; padding: 5px; width: 30px; margin: 0 auto;">1</div>
<b>Pupil outcomes</b> The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school .....	<div style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 5px; width: 30px; margin: 0 auto;">1</div>
<b>Provision</b> The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school .....	<div style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 5px; width: 30px; margin: 0 auto;">1</div>
<b>Leadership</b> How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school .....	<div style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 5px; width: 30px; margin: 0 auto;">1</div>

Students have a deep understanding of their distinctive Catholic identity, and this reflects the mission of the college which is actively lived out by all stakeholders. Consequently, students feel a genuine sense of care, both day students and those who board. This has created a tangible feeling of togetherness in Christ, where every student flourishes in their own relationship with God. Students are highly determined to seek change in the world. They recognise the value that helping others brings to them as individuals and are beautifully articulate in their reflections of the work they have done and the difference this has made. For example, there is a group of students who support the homeless through sleepouts and bring awareness to others of the challenges people face. The college demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity and inclusivity. Students of other faiths and no faith comment that they feel like an integral part of the community with one student mentioning the provision for prayer for those of other faiths. In some special instances, students commented on how their faith has been found or strengthened as a direct result of being part of the Ampleforth community. The college's commitment to 'Ora et Labora' is evident in the way in which prayer punctuates the day and through the acts of service witnessed in the lives of students. This has a profound and lasting effect on the community. One student commented that 'pupils leave the valley but never leave Ampleforth.'

The Ampleforth community goes to extreme lengths to provide a full and inspiring provision that students embrace wholeheartedly. All staff are steadfast and deeply aligned with the mission of the college. Christ is truly at the heart of the school. There are a wealth of opportunities for students to encounter Christ both explicitly and implicitly. Students comment that these experiences are important to them and help shape their lives, allowing them to serve after having been fully immersed in their faith. The new focus on Benedictine scholarship permeates all that is done at Ampleforth. It

brings together the pastoral strengths of the college which, in turn, supports the academic achievements of students. There is a meticulously planned relationships, sex and health education curriculum which is personalised to suit the needs of the students. It serves them well. The iconography throughout the college is a constant reminder of the centrality of Christ in the community.

Leaders ensure that Catholic life and mission forms the basis of all school policies. It is woven into the fabric of college life. The college values its links with the Diocese and its schools and leaders have a strategy to further strengthen these links over time. Leaders encourage students to become actively involved in the life of the parish and wider community, often leading by example. This work is thriving and continues to strengthen due to the unwavering commitment of leaders. Parents and carers are fully involved in the Catholic life of the school and are appreciative of the opportunities offered to them. One parent commented, 'I feel part of a community which is very special.' Also, parents strongly believe that pastoral provision has been 'turbocharged' through the developing relationship between the existing chaplaincy team and the new lay chaplain who support the students. Governors know their school well and are passionate about their vision that Catholic life and mission are central to all that children do. They are fully involved in the implementation of new initiatives and supportive of college leaders in a constructive yet analytical manner. Their contribution has had a positive impact on the Ampleforth community.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....	1
<b>Pupil outcomes</b> How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....	1
<b>Provision</b> The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....	1
<b>Leadership</b> How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....	1

Students at Ampleforth enjoy their Christian theology lessons and like their teachers. Through discussions with students, it is evident that they feel challenged and supported by staff, whom they hold in high regard. Their knowledge is strong and the development of their understanding of the curriculum is supported by the excellent subject knowledge of staff, who develop answers with high levels of questioning. They relate well to lesson content, which makes links to prior learning and wider knowledge, and can articulate their learning well in lessons during discussions, demonstrating high levels of religious literacy. This is a consequence of the department's vision to enable students to become excellent theologians. Behaviour for learning is outstanding; ensuring an environment in which students are able to engage and there are many opportunities for independent working. Students are keen to praise each other, and teachers reward effort with genuine words of warm encouragement and praise. Pupil attainment reflects their passion for the subject, especially at A level.

All staff have extremely impressive subject knowledge and high expectations of students. This creates a purposeful learning environment. Where teaching is most effective, staff challenge and support students appropriately. An example being a Year 11 lesson on forgiveness and reconciliation where the teacher used questioning to great effect, allowing time for students to consider their responses and, through further questioning, provided opportunities for them to deepen their understanding and consolidate their learning. Summative assessment is strong with clear and thought-provoking comments offered that give students a clear picture of what to do to improve and they understand this, and student respond well. There are also effective formative assessment strategies in place to allow students to make progress and when teaching

is at its best these are used well. However, in a small minority of lessons there are inconsistencies in implementation. Some students do not benefit fully from a focus that responds to their individual areas for development on a lesson-by-lesson basis. Intervention with students is a strength and adaptive teaching is outstanding. Consequently, students are able to access a highly ambitious curriculum and meet expectations. Student achievement is celebrated through the 'Benedictine scholar of the week' award and this is well received by them. The Christian theology department has a strong understanding of its role in the moral and spiritual formation of their students. Reflection is a core part of all lessons and affords students the opportunity to contextualise their learning. The department is an effective team and is well-managed.

Christian theology has absolute parity with other core subjects at Ampleforth, demonstrating the high value that leaders place on the subject. Leaders have also ensured that the school has begun implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory* curriculum in Year 7. However, effective sequencing rationale of the curriculum is not yet completely secure. The subject lead, supported by the head of teaching and learning, has created innovative strategies to monitor and review progress, consequently they know where appropriate intervention is required. There are strong quality assurance systems in place which support the incremental coaching programme and this assists staff in developing their practise. Leaders have also worked hard to develop links with other Catholic schools in the diocese and these collaborations have strengthened the work of the Christian theology department. Plans are in place to strengthen these links over the coming year.

## Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship .....

1

### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school .....

1

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship .....

1



Students are fully immersed in the prayer and liturgy life that Ampleforth offers. It runs deeply through everything that they do. It is clear from discussions with former students that the impact of the Ampleforth experience for students stays with them long after they have left the college. The Ampleforth community has established an environment where students can celebrate together with a deep sense of joy. There is a profound and visible impact on all students irrespective of their faith background and the school is right in saying that 'prayer is not an event at Ampleforth, it is a way of life.' This is demonstrated in a wide variety of prayer and liturgy including uplifting, communal singing. The dedication to ensuring that student led worship is central to this prayer and liturgy is highly impressive. Students work well with their peers, staff and the chaplaincy team to develop and lead on meaningful prayer experiences. They speak passionately about their involvement and have great ownership of their own spiritual experience. Students are fully aware of the shape of the liturgical year and speak confidently about the links between the liturgical calendar and prayer in the life of the school.

The richness of the Benedictine tradition provides a natural rhythm for daily prayer that lifts the prayer lives of the whole community. Morning and evening prayers in all houses place prayer and liturgy at the heart of the college. Students comment that iconography is used to good effect during prayer times and provides a focus for them. Student led 'Lectio Divina' affords a deeper understanding for each individual and gives an added dimension to their formation. The enhanced provision of chaplaincy, through the introduction of the lay chaplain and the graduate lay chaplain, is complemented by the already outstanding chaplaincy on offer. As this relatively new relationship evolves, the college is keen to ensure that the provision for chaplaincy is strengthened further. Retreats are planned at key points in the year and are made available to

all students and staff. Students talked enthusiastically about their experiences on retreat and value them. Staff also appreciate these experiences commenting that they feel better prepared in supporting students with their spiritual journey. All at the college are sensitive to the needs of students of other faiths and they are well supported in their formation through the strong links that Ampleforth has established with other churches. An example is the work done by a member of staff, who helps prepare Anglican students for Confirmation. A programme that runs concurrently with the Catholic Confirmation programme.

Leaders and governors have a thorough understanding of, and a strong commitment to, prayer and liturgy within Ampleforth. They place the utmost importance on preserving the Catholic traditions of Ampleforth, to the benefit of the students in their care. Mass, the sacraments and Holy days of obligation are of paramount importance to the college. Leaders and governors have a clear and inspiring vision for collective worship. They are passionate about their faith and respectful of students of other faiths within their community. Leaders are constantly striving to ensure that collective worship provision is appropriate for all at Ampleforth by reviewing and monitoring what is currently in place. Leaders plan the school calendar to ensure that key dates in the Church's year are celebrated and their thoughtful timing ensures that these opportunities are made available to all staff and students. Leaders provide, alongside the school's chaplaincy team, robust and considered training opportunities for prayer and liturgy opportunities.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	Ampleforth College
School unique reference number (URN)	121735
Full postal address of the school	Ampleforth College York YO62 4ER
School phone number	01439 766000
Name of head teacher or principal	Peter Roberts
Chair of governing board	Edward Sparrow
School Website	<a href="http://www.ampleforthcollege.org.uk">www.ampleforthcollege.org.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Laurence Education Trust
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	11-19
Trustees	St Laurence Education Trust in the Diocese of Middlesbrough
Gender of pupils	mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	February 2014
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

### The inspection team:

Mark Taylor	Lead inspector
Rosa Flanagan	Team inspector
Ed Allanson	Team inspector

### Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
<b>1</b>	Outstanding	Excellent
<b>2</b>	Good	Good
<b>3</b>	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
<b>4</b>	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement