



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

AMPLEFORTH COLLEGE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Ampleforth College

Full Name of School	Ampleforth College
DfE Number	815/6006
Registered Charity Number	1063808
Address	Ampleforth College York North Yorkshire YO62 4ER
Telephone Number	01439 766000
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Email Address	admin@ampleforth.org.uk
Head	Fr Gabriel Everitt
Chair of Governors	Fr Cuthbert Madden, Abbot of Ampleforth
Age Range	12 to 19
Total Number of Pupils	611
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (429 boys; 182 girls;)
Numbers by Age	12-19: 611
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 91
Number of Boarders	Total: 520 Full: 520
Inspection dates	22 Jan 2013 to 25 Jan 2013

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in April 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Peter Jones	Reporting Inspector
Miss Julia Bowden	Team Inspector (Senior Education Executive, UCST)
Mrs Marie Bush	Team Inspector (Deputy Headmistress, GSA school)
Mrs Gillian Dixon	Team Inspector (Headteacher, HMC school)
Mrs Valerie Fogarty	Team Inspector (Head of Middle School, HMC school)
Mrs Penny Goodman	Team inspector (Deputy Headteacher, HMC school)
Miss Elizabeth Knibb	Team Inspector (Assistant Headteacher, HMC school)
Mr John Tolputt	Team inspector (Former Headteacher, Society of Heads school)
Mr Gregg Davies	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr William Yates	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Headteacher, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Opened in 1803, Ampleforth College is a full-boarding school with day school provision, located on the southern edge of the North York moors, about four miles from the market town of Helmsley. It is a Roman Catholic Benedictine monastic school for whom the Rule of St Benedict guides its core values. The Benedictine Community of Ampleforth Abbey, together with the lay staff, runs schools as a major part of the Community's work. The college is a work of Ampleforth Abbey, which operates the school through the St Laurence Education Trust, itself a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Ampleforth Abbey Trust. The trustees of the St Laurence Education Trust are the legal governors of the school. The chair of the Trust is the Abbot of Ampleforth and the vice chair is a lay person.
- 1.2 The school's mission is to share with parents the spiritual, moral and intellectual formation of their children, in a Christian community with which their families may be joined in friendship and prayer for the rest of their lives. The school aims to educate the young in the tradition and sacramental life of the Church and to encourage each towards a joyful, free and self-disciplined life of faith and virtue, to work for excellence in all endeavours, academic, sporting and cultural. The school says that it 'asks each student to give of their best. Each is taught to appreciate the value of learning and the pursuit of the truth, to help them to grow up mature and honourable, inspired by high ideals and capable of leadership, so that they may serve others generously, be strong in friendship, and loving and loyal towards their families'. The school summarises its aims in the phrase "holy, happy, hard-working".
- 1.3 Most pupils board at the school and those that do not are attached to one of the ten boarding houses, three of these are for girls and seven for boys. Since the previous inspection the proportion of girls has increased and one of the houses is now a girls' house for those aged thirteen to eighteen, increasing the school's capacity for girls. All financial benefit has been removed from scholarships and added to bursary provision. Since September 2011 all housemasters and housemistresses have been lay persons.
- 1.4 The school has 611 pupils in total, with 370 boy boarders and 59 day boys, together with 150 girl boarders and 32 day girls. There are 269 pupils in the sixth form. One hundred and thirty pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 32 of these receive specialist learning support from the school. One hundred and twelve pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and 80 of these require language support. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Almost three-quarters of pupils are of at least above average ability, with few having ability that is below average. The ability profile of the sixth form is in line with the national average.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Fourth Form	Year 9
Fifth Form	Year 10
Remove	Year 11
Middle Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Ampleforth College is highly effective in meeting its aims. A compelling sense of a community successfully acts in good faith to guide, educate and empower young people in the spirit of the rule of St Benedict. Academic and other achievements are excellent at all levels and for different groups throughout the school, including boys and girls, and those with SEND or EAL. The very high quality of the curriculum, with its wide range of subjects and extensive extra-curricular programme, including creative arts and sport, plays a significant role in allowing pupils to achieve their full potential. Excellent teaching supports achievement in public examinations and in ensuring pupils develop robust and independent learning skills, and draws on teachers' high levels of subject expertise and their knowledge of their pupils and their abilities. The school has responded well to the recommendation from the previous report about extending the academic curriculum, and good progress has been made on meeting the recommendation to share good practice in teaching and learning, but the school is aware that there is still scope available to ensure that all teaching matches the excellent provision which prevails.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent, reflecting the importance the school places on spiritual and moral education, and the part played by the highly effective pastoral care system for boarding and day pupils in their social and cultural development. The school meets its aims to help pupils become mature and honourable, inspired by high ideals and capable of leadership. Boarding is of excellent quality, with excellent outcomes, accommodation and leadership and management of boarding all playing a key part in the effectiveness of the school and ensuring that it meets its aims. The school has met in full the recommendations which arose from the previous inspection of boarding.
- 2.3 The school is very well governed by a body of trustees which includes lay people as well as religious, with a strong focus on safeguarding, and on holding the school stringently to account to help it improve its provision. Leadership and management of this complex school, with its many facets, is excellent overall. There are great strengths in spiritual, moral and social development, boarding and pastoral care. This is a vibrant, cohesive school community which is enjoyed by its pupils and strongly supported by its parents. The school knows where its areas for development lie, specifically in the further development of teaching and in the improvement of the quality of marking and assessment. It is well placed to achieve its plans.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2013.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Strengthen the management of teaching to bring all up to the standard of the best.
 2. Ensure consistent high quality of marking and assessment across and within subject areas.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aim to nurture "holy, happy and hard-working" pupils. The Benedictine ethos and the Catholic tradition underpin school life and are key in shaping pupils' attitudes and achievements. The high standard of achievement has been maintained since the previous inspection.
- 3.3 Throughout the school pupils display good, and frequently, very high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills across their subject areas and activities. Pupils are articulate and confident learners who can write fluently and accurately, although the presentation of their written work is not always of the highest standard. They are numerate, and use their mathematics effectively across the curriculum. Their creative work is of a high standard in art, music and design and technology. Pupils develop very well their physical abilities through an excellent and extensive sport and activity programme.
- 3.4 Pupils have achieved many significant successes in recent years at regional and national levels in competitions such as in the UK Mathematics Challenge, British physics and biology Olympiads and the Royal Academy Art Exhibition. Music is of the highest quality and a number of pupils have gained places in the National Youth Orchestra and Choir, and the Young Northern Sinfonia. Many sporting honours have been achieved, especially in rugby and girls' hockey. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and shooting teams excel and achieve at the very highest levels.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2009-11, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. These results have shown improvement during the three year period. The A-level results have been above the national average for maintained selective schools. The level of attainment at GCSE in 2009 to 2011 and nationally standardised measures of progress, together with evidence from the inspection, indicates that pupils make progress to Year 11 that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. On the same basis, pupils make progress in the sixth form that is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils are generally successful in gaining places at their first choice of university and course. Pupils at all levels and from different groups, including boys and girls, the most able, along with those with SEND and EAL, make at least good progress. This reflects the excellence of the school's teaching, and its careful focus on the individual, in line with its aims.
- 3.6 The pupils' achievement is strongly supported by their positive attitudes to learning, their generally excellent behaviour and the exceptional relationships that they have with staff. In lessons, pupils are relaxed and confident, ready to take part and unafraid of making mistakes. They work co-operatively, support each other and show great respect and loyalty to their teachers. Pupils respond very well when encouraged, and are able to think and work independently, show initiative, demonstrate good research skills and argue and debate robustly. Pupils enjoy their academic studies and participate in the extra-curricular programme with great enthusiasm. The genuine affection they show for their school is an important factor in maintaining their positive attitudes to work and involvement in activities.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum is highly successful in meeting the school's aim to work towards excellence in all endeavours, academic, sporting and cultural. Its coverage of the requisite areas of learning is very good. It is stimulating and wide-ranging, providing a highly effective contribution to pupils' linguistic, mathematical and scientific development. The school's provision for human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development is of very good quality. Flexibility in the curriculum enables pupils to study extra subjects, for example modern foreign languages. Greek and separate sciences are available to challenge the more able. Pupils' physical development has been extended through the inclusion of games within the mainstream curriculum, and social and health education development is nurtured through the school's Christian Living course. Provision for technological development is very well met through design and technology, including electronics. Provision for education in information and communication and technology (ICT) is less well developed. Sixth form students choose from an exceptionally wide range of subjects. All are required to study Christian theology, supporting the school's aim to educate young people in a life of faith. This is a particularly strong aspect of the school's educational provision and a high proportion of sixth formers take the subject at A level with many of them going on to study theology at university.
- 3.9 The curriculum is very well suited for pupils of all ages and abilities. Timely identification of the learning needs of pupils with EAL and SEND ensures that they receive appropriate support in or out of class for their specific educational requirements whilst enabling them to follow a full programme of study. In the best lessons observed, different tasks were set to cater for pupils' differing abilities and learning styles, thereby challenging the gifted with extension activities and simultaneously encouraging the weaker with more accessible material. However, this practice is not yet fully incorporated into schemes of work and lesson planning.
- 3.10 The school has responded positively to the recommendation from the previous inspection report to extend the academic curriculum beyond the confines of public examination requirements by further developing activities and focussing staff training on teaching so that it fosters delight in learning. This has resulted in an increase in the number of academic, department-led societies, ranging from the junior classics society to debates and science Olympiads. Specific initiatives to provide intellectual stimulus for the most able are regularly devised, for example, in German and geography lessons where further, more demanding tasks are set for pupils finishing classwork early, and in history where an off-syllabus Year 10 project on World War Two allowed pupils to develop as independent learners. For sixth form, the Extended Project Qualification has provided the opportunity to develop independent learning and research skills, and the school's prize essay competition is open to all pupils. Great care is taken to help pupils decide which GCSE and A-level courses to take. The Higher Education and Careers Conference along with excellent career advice helps pupils decide on their future vocations or degree choices. However, the absence of formal training for sixth form tutors about UCAS applications has resulted in a few cases where students feel that they have not had sufficient guidance.
- 3.11 The academic curriculum is very well supported by a range of over 70 extra-curricular activities. Participation is high and these activities are a major factor in the development and promotion of pupils' personal qualities. Sport and music play a

central role in the life of the school with high levels of participation and achievement recorded. The CCF and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which is undertaken by about a quarter of pupils, provide outdoor education and leadership opportunities. There is great breadth and diversity to the range of activities including, for example, chess, speech and drama training, pheasant shooting, karate, Scottish piping and vehicle re-building. The breadth and range of activities on offer explain the pupils' enthusiasm for the extra-curricular programme and play an important part in giving the school its distinctive character.

- 3.12 Environmental awareness is well developed through 'green lunches' which use less energy and a house competition which focuses on energy conservation. Links with the local and wider community are well established. Pupils volunteer to serve weekly in placements in the local community in primary schools, charity shops and old people's homes, while others are involved in sporting events with maintained schools to develop their sport or other collaborative projects. Money is raised annually to host a holiday scheme for young people with disabilities. One pupil involved in this scheme described it as "a life-changing experience". Substantial sums are raised annually for charity, as for example when two boys were sponsored to skateboard from Land's End to John O'Groats.
- 3.13 Numerous opportunities exist for pupils to take part in excursions at home and abroad. Recently these have included music tours, language study visits, pilgrimages to Lourdes, a biology trip to Tanzania, a CCF summer camp in Borneo, a ten day visit to Israel and many more. The school has a clear plan to develop and co-ordinate its programme of visits and excursions. The overseas visits together with the daily contact with an international school community serve to raise and strengthen pupils' cultural awareness and understanding of other faiths and nationalities.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 This high standard of teaching supports the school's aim to help pupils appreciate the value of learning. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught and positive relationships between teachers and pupils are a particularly strong feature. This encourages good behaviour and ensures that the overwhelming majority of pupils feel very well supported by their teachers. Teaching at all levels of the school stimulates pupils' interest and enables very good progress in knowledge, understanding and skills. Almost all lessons are very well planned and structured.
- 3.16 Much of the teaching builds successfully on previous learning and uses a suitable variety of teaching methods and resources to foster interest and support rapid progress. Enthusiasm for, and expectation of, high levels of achievement are the hallmark of these excellent lessons, which offer ample opportunities for pupils to think and learn for themselves. For example, Year 10 pupils held an excellent discussion on the issues involved in decisions about the legal status of drugs and in the sixth form students successfully applied their existing knowledge to new challenges in algebraic geometry. This high quality teaching also demonstrates a rapid pace to learning and challenges the most able, enabling pupils to talk with confidence and pride about their work and to articulate their enjoyment and progress.

- 3.17 The school's aim of asking much of the gifted and encouraging those less able is strongly supported by the provision for those with particular learning needs. Specialist support for those pupils with SEND and EAL is highly effective, with lesson planning and schemes of work showing careful attention to their learning needs. The Scholars' Programme of lectures and activities enriches the learning opportunities for the most able. In a small proportion of teaching, an over reliance on workbooks and work less tailored to the needs of individual pupils, slows the pace of learning.
- 3.18 Assessment contributes significantly to the good progress seen overall, but implementation of the effective policy is sometimes inconsistent. The school system of grades is well understood by pupils and is used across all departments and stages to support learning and progress. The best teaching demonstrates highly effective oral feedback, the setting of clear targets, written comments on how to improve work, and assessment to support pupil progress. This process is valued by pupils as a way of helping them improve their skills and knowledge. Where marking and assessment are less effective, pupils are not always as clear as they might be about how to improve, or how well they could be doing.
- 3.19 The school has responded positively to the findings of the previous inspection. Developments in management structure, performance management, lesson observations, and work scrutiny have all contributed to an improvement in the level of professional dialogue about teaching; much has been achieved.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school fulfils its aim for pupils to become decent, kind human beings with a sense of responsibility and service, with a clear moral compass. Pupils recognise the value of the school's religious setting and the positive impact it has on their faith and personal development. The confidence pupils show in articulating ideas about faith and the spiritual life reflects the impact of the school's educational philosophy, particularly its Christian Living programme, enriched by many additional activities such as involvement with the Emmaus Community, scriptural reading in Lectio and house retreats.
- 4.3 Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They support each other well and are prepared to offer help when they see someone in difficulty. They gain significantly in the development of moral values through the school's emphasis on service and community. The work pupils do, for example, in local old people's homes and the extensive charitable fundraising projects they undertake shows their commitment to accepting responsibility for helping those less fortunate than themselves. The participation of a high proportion of pupils in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award gives them an awareness of their social role through its service component. Their awareness of key political, social and economic issues such as human rights, child labour, genetics and the dangers of smoking is good, and is developed through their participation in regular discussion and debate on such matters. Awareness of the public institutions and services of England is very good and supported by visits from politicians of differing persuasions and giving a balanced view.
- 4.4 Throughout the school pupils are active members of the community and assume roles to serve at many levels. They take on responsibilities to help in the running of the school such as mentors to younger pupils, monitors, heads of sport, student council representatives and participation in the Combined Cadet Force.
- 4.5 Pupils develop a strong cultural awareness through their participation in house plays, music concerts and art displays. Pupils show a pride in the many activities developing cultural appreciation, including the spirituality and quality of expression in the Schola Cantorum choir. The wide range of nationalities represented in the school allows pupils to develop their awareness of other cultural traditions through friendships in the international communities in the houses, as well as the presence of visiting groups of young people from Chile. Cultural awareness is also developed through an extensive range of overseas visits including an annual pilgrimage to Lourdes. Pupils know about different faiths and cultures through the study of world religions as part of the curriculum. The recent talk given by a Holocaust survivor to sixth-form pupils had a significant impact on their awareness of the importance of tolerance and harmony between cultural traditions and the dangers of extremism.
- 4.6 By the time they leave the school pupils are confident and self-aware, show a very good understanding of their responsibilities and have an excellent standard of personal development.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The school is successful in meeting its aim to support and guide young people, educating them in the tradition and sacramental life of the Church and encouraging them towards a joyful, free and self-disciplined life of faith and virtue, and to work for excellence in all their endeavours. High-quality policies for pastoral care are implemented as intended and regularly updated. The house system is a great strength of the school and supports the excellent pastoral care. There is a very well planned welfare programme, with weekly meetings between pastoral care staff and heads of houses to discuss pupils' personal development and well-being. An extensive induction programme in Year 9 helps pupils settle into the school. Relationships between pupils, and between staff and pupils are very good, which has a positive impact upon their care. Pupils say that they feel safe, happy and well supported.
- 4.9 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles through participation in the many sporting activities on offer. They learn about healthy living in biology, health education and Christian Living lessons. A food committee has helped to make positive changes to menus.
- 4.10 The school is very effective in promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying, and deals constructively with any unacceptable behaviour. A new behaviour policy is administered well and a guide promoting good behaviour, distributed to all pupils and which the sixth form helped to rewrite, contains a sanctions guide and useful information, advice and policies. During their interviews with inspectors, and in informal chats during the inspection, pupils reported that there are very few incidents of bullying and when any occurs it is dealt with quickly and effectively. In the questionnaire distributed as part of this inspection some of the pupils who responded said that they did not always feel that sanctions were used fairly by teachers. The college is aware of pupils' perceptions in this area and has moved to ensure greater consistency. Inspectors did not find evidence of significant differences in the way behaviour was managed across the school.
- 4.11 Pupils with SEND and EAL are fully included in the life of the school and are well supported. The school has suitable plans to improve educational access for such pupils. Great care is taken to help pupils decide which GCSEs and A levels to take.
- 4.12 The school employs appropriate methods to seek the views of pupils. The student forum meets half termly with senior staff and results from the forum are published and announced to students in Year 9 to 11 assemblies.

4.(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 The school has put in place safeguarding arrangements which have regard to official guidance, and which take proper account of the context of the school. A suitable strategy for safe recruitment, and arrangements for the training of staff for child protection both meet requirements. Policies relating to welfare, health and safety are in place, and are reviewed regularly. The school has policies and procedures to ensure that suitable measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, while risk assessments for activities in school and during trips and visits are effective. The school provides well for pupils who are ill or injured with a medical

centre staffed day and night by qualified nurses. Provision for pupils with SEND is good and meets requirements. The school maintains suitable admission and attendance registers which are properly maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.15 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.16 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarders' personal development is successfully promoted by their boarding experience and they are articulate, well-mannered and polite. Boarding houses are real communities with the Rule of St Benedict underpinning their ethos. The houses have their distinctive character but a common factor is that they are all friendly and welcoming places, which are well cared for and the pupils are extremely loyal to them. The pupils are confident and self-reliant and enjoy life in their house, looking after it and helping to keep it clean and tidy. They enjoy very good relations with the staff in their house, to whom they feel they can turn if they have any problems, and who show real care for them. They have constructive relationships with each other across all age-groups. Day pupils, pupils from overseas and new boarders are integrated fully into the life of the boarding houses. Boarders have a number of opportunities to take positions of responsibility including being members of the school council, the food committee, being pupil catechists and taking responsibility for duties in the boarding houses and helping in its smooth running. Boarders take part in the wide range of activities available to them and are encouraged to take responsibility for their health-related fitness, using the school's excellent facilities.
- 4.17 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. House staff, who are tutors for year groups in the house, carefully monitor the academic progress and pastoral support of those in their charge. The tutors have good oversight of the commitments of the pupils and are able to manage those that are being stretched in too many directions whilst offering guidance to others. Boarders have a range of adults to whom they can turn to discuss personal issues and a chaplain attached to each house further enhances this care. A bi-weekly chaplaincy period brings each house together for a short service or talk by the house chaplain. Boarders enjoy this opportunity for collective reflection. Chaplains are seen as "wise owls" by boarders and staff and their strong links to each boarding house provide an additional level of support and guidance which has a most positive effect. The promotion of boarders' health and arrangements for medical care has a high priority, with a medical centre staffed at all times. An electronic medication monitoring process enhances the service further. The on-site laundry provides a high quality service and great care is taken with boarders' clothing and possessions. House kitchens are well used and are regularly stocked with varied provisions which boarders appreciate, including a plentiful quantity of fruit. "Deanery" teams are tasked with the cleanliness of house kitchens. Of those boarders who responded to the questionnaires a minority showed dissatisfaction with the meals provided. The inspection found that the range and quantity provided were adequate.
- 4.18 Boarders enjoy the recreational facilities available to them in the houses and use them regularly. There are sufficient common rooms; the largest in each house has a sanctuary area which is located behind sliding doors and is used for morning and evening prayers. The time given to prayer and reflection is valued by most and respected by all. The myriad of activities available to boarders during the early evening ensures that boredom is not a chosen option and there is sufficient variety

to ensure that all interests from cerebral to energetic are covered. A minority of boarders feel that they would benefit from fewer structured periods of time and that their week is too busy: others believe that the opportunities available to them help develop qualities which will benefit them in the future. Inspectors judged the range of activities to be suitable for the age and aptitudes of the pupils, with sufficient opportunities for pupils to make informed choices. A co-ordinated social programme has been developed for weekends which still allows for popular impromptu “socials” between houses on occasional Saturday evenings.

- 4.19 Boarding accommodation is good across the ten houses, each house having different qualities according to the structure and architecture. This brings additional individuality and identity. Some houses, where accommodation allows, appoint Year 11 monitors to look after and lead Year 9 and Year 10 dormitories. Sixth-form accommodation is mostly in single studies and some benefit from en-suite bathrooms. The standard of accommodation varies between houses from excellent to good. A refurbishment programme is underway.
- 4.20 All houses have telephone landlines available to boarders and boarders are able to use mobile phones, given the appropriate network provider. Wi-Fi connections are improving and overseas boarders value the opportunity to make video calls. Communication from tutors and house staff to parents and carers is excellent. Email is used regularly as well as ‘blogs’ and electronic newsletters.
- 4.21 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. The necessary systems are in place and well implemented. Internal and externally provided training is available and encouraged for all connected with the pastoral care of boarders. The behaviour of boarders is excellent. Procedures for sanctions are in place but rarely need to be used. House staff are actively involved in assisting boarders reach appropriate academic levels. Healthy competition between houses extends to the twice-termly progress reports for academic effort and attainment.
- 4.22 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent. Every housemaster and housemistress shows a great commitment to their boarders. The respect generated by their empathetic but firm guidance is clearly evident in the interaction between house staff and boarders. Management of boarding is further enhanced by the excellent work of matrons whose enthusiasm and industry ensures that boarders develop broader skills and qualities needed for life after Ampleforth. Reflection on the past year and development for the future occurs annually and is discussed collectively with input from senior management. This reflects a determination to maintain progress and to ensure that operational differences between houses are reduced.
- 4.23 The previous Ofsted boarding inspection report asked the school to take account of a number of recommendations in relation to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding. These related to ensuring the provision of a written agreement between the school and any adult not employed by the school but living in the same building as boarding accommodation; ensuring there were no significant safety hazards on routes regularly used by boarders; ensuring security measures were place in boarding houses and ensuring that staff supervising boarders outside of teaching time were sufficient in number for the age, number and needs of boarders. These recommendations have now all been met in full.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governance meets the aims of the school through its commitment to the tradition of the work of Ampleforth monastic community and the rule of St Benedict. A new governance structure was put in place in September 2012 with the addition of lay trustees as members of St Laurence Educational Trust. The trustees have a valuable and broad range of expertise. A nominations committee selects governors and effective governor training is in place.
- 5.3 Trustees ensure that excellent systems are in place for safeguarding and child protection. The trustees have introduced an independent safeguarding commission to work with them and the whole body of trustees reviews safeguarding policies annually. A trustee is also designated to focus on safeguarding, equipped with a clear job description for the task. The trustees have a clear vision for the school, underpinned by rigorous financial planning allowing the school to fulfil its mission. The trustees are involved in many areas of school life and are known to staff at all levels through staff training, curriculum monitoring and visits. Trustees visit the school for formal board meetings and informally for school events.
- 5.4 The trustees successfully discharge their responsibilities for investment in accommodation and resources, and are committed to the recruitment of high quality staff. Trustees monitor school policies very carefully, particularly academic standards, teaching and pupils' learning.
- 5.5 The governing body provides strong, supportive advice to the headmaster as well as setting challenging goals for improvement. The governing body effectively evaluates the work of the headmaster through professional review. Strong governance enables the school to provide an excellent education for young people within a Christian community.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.7 The school achieves its aim of 'arranging everything that the strong have something to yearn for and the weak nothing to run from'. A clear vision, founded on the Rule of St Benedict, guides the leadership of the school. The benign effect of this is felt in the way staff and pupils act in good faith, in the high quality of relationships of people living and working together, and in the balance of freedom and responsibility. Positive planning for school development to meet changing circumstances is combined with the preservation of all that is precious in the tradition. Safeguarding and the welfare, health and safety of pupils are managed with thoroughness and high levels of attention to detail. The complex nature of the school means it demands skilled and committed leadership and management. The senior team and other staff meet this demand with great success.

- 5.8 Recent plans to devolve responsibility from the top to middle managers have encouraged heads of departments further to support their colleagues, dealing with challenges themselves rather than leaving them to senior colleagues. Lines of responsibility are clear and all teaching staff are encouraged to take part in strategic planning and in improvement and development of the school. The management of pastoral care is highly effective and links seamlessly with boarding provision. Development as a co-educational school has been managed well; girls are well integrated and do not feel like a minority.
- 5.9 The school is successful in recruiting and retaining high quality staff, who receive appropriate training for their roles in welfare, safeguarding and health and safety. Teaching staff feel well supported by senior colleagues; the recently adapted professional review system is seen as helpful. It is also making a good impression in many, though not yet all, lessons, helping to increase the standard of teaching along with the learning and achievement of pupils. Departmental management, including the monitoring of teaching, is effective in many departments, but less effective in a minority where teaching quality remains more variable. The school has moved forward in self-evaluation and senior staff have consulted colleagues to produce development plans which clearly and realistically define what is expected of all who work in the school.
- 5.10 Senior pupils exercise leadership in the spirit of St Benedict: the emphasis is on care of others rather than discipline and punishment. Opportunities for leadership extend down to younger age groups; the chance to learn about looking after others is a major strength of the college.
- 5.11 Management of non-teaching staff is clear and effective; the annual appraisal system ensures regular monitoring of work in all departments; all reports are seen by the Procurator as senior manager. Appropriate child protection training is carried out for all staff.
- 5.12 Links with parents are excellent and reflect vigorous management efforts to moderate the remoteness of the site. Parents and prospective parents are provided with all the required information about the school through its website and other informative brochures. Reports to parents are thorough and helpful; the website is useful and under further development. The school handles parents' concerns with care and in accordance with its published procedures. Parents are closely in touch with housemasters and housemistresses as their first point of contact with the school and the headmaster encourages parents with concerns to visit and talk with him. Of those parents who responded to the questionnaire distributed as part of this inspection, a small minority did not feel the school dealt well with bullying, but inspection found no evidence to support this view. The overwhelming majority of parents say that their child is safe at school, that they can easily contact the staff who care for their child and are happy with the quality of communication with them. Parents also say they are encouraged to be involved in events and other aspects of the school.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.