

# Ampleforth College

Ampleforth, York, North Yorkshire YO62 4ER

## Inspection dates

3–5 February 2021

### Overall outcome

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

### Boarding provision outcome

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

## Main inspection findings

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

#### *Paragraph 7(b)*

- At the previous inspection in September 2020, inspectors found that the school's leaders did not follow safeguarding and child protection policies or the government's latest guidance to keep pupils safe.
- Scrutiny of case files during this inspection, together with two audits undertaken by external safeguarding and child protection agencies in January 2021, make it clear that leaders, over time, have not followed the procedures in the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and in the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education'.
- Following extensive training delivered by one of the external agencies in January 2021, this has now changed. All adults, including trustees, monks who are teachers, and support staff, have an up-to-date knowledge of, and are acting in accordance with, 'Keeping children safe in education' (2020) currently.
- This standard is now met.

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

- At the time of the last inspection, the school's poor culture of safeguarding meant that staff did not share information with each other or with the relevant statutory agencies in a timely manner. As a result, pupils did not receive the necessary professional support. Until very recently, staff did not check that safeguarding incidents had been addressed. Some assumed that others had reported concerns. Staff did not check routinely that this had happened or escalate their concerns.
- Inspectors, during this inspection, found that the school's arrangements for safeguarding are hampered by confusing and overly complex systems. Information is held in too many

different places. This makes it difficult for staff to know what risks pupils may be vulnerable to and how to protect them from these risks.

- One of the January 2021 external audits of safeguarding identified that records were difficult to follow and that safeguarding information was recorded inappropriately under several different headings. This audit found that senior leaders did not share safeguarding concerns, or follow the correct pathways, consistently. In addition, information was shared inappropriately with third parties. For example, on certain occasions, safeguarding concerns about children had been discussed directly with the local authority's designated officer instead of the local authority's children's social work team. These findings were confirmed during this inspection. Leaders have started to improve these processes by putting in place systems and procedures within the last three weeks.
- Despite recent improvements to record keeping in January 2021, there are still systemic weaknesses regarding what is recorded by adults in the school's online data storage tool. For example, chronologies remain incomplete. There is little evaluation of the actions taken by staff or the impact of these actions, including the next steps to be taken for the pupils involved following safeguarding incidents. These systemic weaknesses are being addressed currently but it is too soon to see the impact of leaders' actions.
- Leaders, acting on the support and advice from one of the external agencies, have recently adopted a system for the regular review of safeguarding and child protection issues. From mid January 2021, leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead, deputy designated safeguarding leads and house masters and mistresses, review safeguarding concerns alongside information on pupils' attendance, issues in school or at home and emotional well-being. Leaders then outline the next steps to be taken for pupils. Middle leaders, such as the deputy designated safeguarding leads, are enthusiastic about this system. However, it has not been in place long enough, just three weeks, to have had a tangible impact on pupils' outcomes. There is still much work to do to ensure that new policies and procedures relating to safeguarding are implemented effectively and consistently.
- Staff, including teachers and monks who are teachers, report increased continuing professional development in safeguarding, recently. They receive regular safeguarding update briefings. Adults complete five-a-day quizzes to check their understanding of safeguarding. All acknowledge that safeguarding is still a work in progress.
- Leaders have started to improve safeguarding processes and procedures, but these improvements are not yet fully embedded. As part of their very recent review of past records, leaders have come across some serious safeguarding concerns that had not been referred to the relevant authorities. These concerns have been referred to the appropriate agencies now. Leaders are currently in the process of undertaking a full review of all information they hold to ensure that no further concerns have been missed. This review is ongoing.
- These standards remain unmet.

*Paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- Safety plans, care plans and risk assessments are in place across the school. However, staff are unsure of which plan is to be used for which purpose. As a result, there is a lack of consistent practice across the school. During the inspection, the designated

safeguarding lead put a chart in place to help staff to identify which plan to use. This new prompt requires consultation, clarification and streamlining.

- The risk assessment policy does not address the full range of risks at the school and the actions taken to reduce risks. For example, there is no mention in the policy of the shared premises (which incorporate a place of worship), alcohol consumption, smoking and vaping, and the safeguarding risks arising from the presence of non-staff adults (for example, adult children of boarding staff) on the premises. There are some completed risk assessments which take into account the shared use of the Ampleforth site. These risk assessments rely heavily on staff supervision to mitigate risks to pupils. The template used for these risk assessments is different to the exemplar template in the school's policy document. Again, this indicates a lack of consistent practice.
- There is a risk assessment in place for sixth-form pupils drinking alcohol in the on-site public house. In addition, there is a general risk assessment relating to pupils drinking alcohol at social events. During the inspection, the alcohol policy was amended by the school. Reference to serving alcohol in the house masters'/ mistresses' accommodation has been removed from the new version. This reduces the risk of excessive alcohol consumption by pupils on the school's site.
- Risk assessments for individual pupils do not reflect the range of risks to which they are vulnerable. Furthermore, these risk assessments do not contain all the necessary information to ensure that appropriate support is put in place for pupils.
- The lead inspector, at the time of the emergency inspection in September 2020, advised the headteacher that risk assessments required attention. The DfE commissioned Ofsted to look at risk assessments, in addition to the previously unmet standards, during this inspection. These standards were met during the previous inspection but are now not met.

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

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

- Safer recruitment checks are carried out and recorded well at Ampleforth College. The school's single central register of recruitment checks is compliant with the government's requirements.
- These standards were met at the last inspection and remain met.

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

*Paragraphs 28(1) and 28(1)(d)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors found that the temperature of the hot water was variable. In some places it was not hot enough and in others it posed a scalding risk.

- Facilities management staff have rectified the issue. They check the temperature of the hot water on a daily basis. Though hot, the water does not present a scalding risk. Safety signage is now in place.
- These standards are now met.

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

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

- At the previous inspection, inspectors found that leaders failed significantly to safeguard pupils effectively. Pupils' well-being was not ensured. Leaders were failing to ensure that the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools were met consistently.
- The two external reviews, commissioned by the headteacher and undertaken in January 2021, are acting as catalysts for change. After a long period of poor practice, leaders have started, very recently, to implement the many recommended changes. However, because of the very short timescales, changes are not fully embedded.
- Processes, such as record keeping, are being addressed first, by leaders across the school and the boarding houses. Although leaders can see some improvement, this is the tip of the iceberg. The improvements are being made from an extremely low starting point. This is the start of a very long journey for the school, its leaders and the trustees.
- Until recently, trustees have not been provided with accurate or timely information about safeguarding practice. As a result, they held an overly positive view of the effectiveness of these arrangements. They now accept the need for change fully.
- The school's trustees, headteacher and senior leaders now acknowledge the accuracy of Ofsted's September 2020 report. The chair of trustees explained to the inspection team that he was 'shocked and disappointed' by the results of the two audits of safeguarding carried out by the external agencies. Trustees acknowledge significant elements of previously 'unsatisfactory' practice and report that case management was 'spectacularly wrong'.
- The trustees state that they are determined to restore the 'sovereignty of safeguarding' to the school. Until capacity is built up in the school, the trustees have contracted with one of the external agencies to provide daily advice and support over a three-month period, from the beginning of January 2021. This advice and support will continue until the end of 2023, on a less-regular basis.
- As the chief executive officer (CEO) of one of the external agencies said, at the point they were called in, in late December 2020, safeguarding at the school was in need of crisis management. There were many significant failings. For example, there was a lack of understanding about multi-agency safeguarding teams, the designated officer, early help referrals to children's social care, and wide confusion about reporting. These issues were compounded by senior leaders' lack of comprehension of safeguarding practices and procedures. These views were confirmed during this inspection. The external agency has now prepared a rapid improvement plan. This plan has been adopted by senior leaders.
- The rapid improvement plan addresses many weaknesses identified by the external agency's audit so far. The weaknesses include: no regular meetings between house masters and mistresses to discuss pupils; the staff's poor knowledge of safeguarding and

child protection; weak case management; poor record keeping; a lack of timely referrals to statutory agencies, and little multi-agency dialogue. The rapid improvement plan begins with an opening paragraph which identifies 'a lack of safeguarding understanding and culture' at the school.

- This external agency has not yet completed its audit of the school's work fully. During the inspection, the CEO of the agency confirmed that the audit will cover counselling next. Weaknesses in the recording of case notes were identified by the inspection team during this inspection.
- Three different versions of the child protection and safeguarding policy were uploaded to the school's website over a three-week period in January 2021. Another version was created during the inspection. The frequent amendments to this 55-page long document make it very difficult for staff to keep up to date with, and consequently act in accordance with, the content of this very important policy.
- The new trustee with responsibility for safeguarding acknowledges that the school's child protection and safeguarding policy is overly long and requires overhauling. It is not always clear from the policy, who (for example, designated safeguarding lead, headteacher or chair of trustees) is responsible for the different aspects of the procedures for dealing with safeguarding concerns and risks to pupils.
- A timetable of activities to monitor and evaluate activities in relation to safeguarding has been put in place for senior leaders recently. It is too early to see any impact of this initiative. However, senior leaders' knowledge and understanding of the culture of safeguarding at Ampleforth College has grown rapidly over a very short period of time. Under the auspices of the external agency, leaders' practice is developing.
- Some degree of separation has been achieved between the Ampleforth Abbey Trust and the St Laurence Education Trust (SLET). The finance function is now separate. Grounds maintenance and human resources are in the process of separation. The information and communications technology security system is not separate yet, but it is managed by the school. There is no longer a joint director of safeguarding. SLET trustees have put in place a bespoke safeguarding sub-committee for Ampleforth College only. In addition, an agreement, dated 12 January 2021, acknowledges that decisions about who is resident at Ampleforth Abbey take account of the school's duty to safeguard pupils.
- Four hundred and sixty-five out of 484 parents and carers responded to Ofsted's Parent View survey during the inspection. Parental responses indicate widespread support for the school and the headteacher. The overwhelming majority of the 465 free-text responses are positive. A very small minority of parents mentioned concerns about bullying.
- Trustees, the headteacher and senior leaders are determined that there should be a culture of safeguarding at Ampleforth College. Acting on the results of the two external reviews, this journey has just begun. But, leaders remain heavily reliant on external support. They are not demonstrating the skills and knowledge to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently.
- These standards remain unmet.

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

### *Standard 11.1*

- At the time of the previous inspection, failings in the leadership and management of safeguarding across the school were found to impact negatively on the ability to safeguard boarders.
- Senior leaders and managers acknowledge these past shortfalls. They are actively working with an external safeguarding and child protection agency to improve safeguarding practice and culture across the school and boarding provision. There are new processes and procedures in place in relation to the recording, reporting and management of safeguarding incidents. Processes and procedures now provide clear guidelines for leaders and staff to follow. These guidelines help to ensure that information is used effectively and pupils receive the correct support without delay. The changes are very new and their impact could not be evaluated at this inspection.
- The pupils, including some of the most vulnerable, have access to qualified counsellors. The counsellors continue to work with pupils remotely during the national lockdown. Before one of the external agencies started to support and advise the school, an incident occurred where information was not passed on in line with statutory guidance. There is external clinical supervision for counsellors and some oversight through a range of meetings. However, the school's leaders have not assured themselves that there are no other shortfalls in information-sharing, during counselling sessions, that could significantly affect the safety of pupils. The quality of counsellors' notes makes it difficult to assess if pupils are safeguarded.
- The pupils benefit from access to a wide network of health professionals on site. Pupils can access support for their physical and emotional well-being. During lockdown, members of staff provide pastoral care for each pupil at the level that is needed.
- The standard remains unmet.

### *Standards 13.3 and 13.4*

- Previously, inspectors found that failings in the leadership and governance of safeguarding across the school also impacted negatively on their ability to safeguard pupils who are boarding.
- The designated safeguarding lead is clear and confident about reporting procedures and the management of allegations. The external agency is supporting the designated safeguarding lead and senior leaders currently to improve safeguarding practice. The school's leaders continue to require support from external agencies to ensure that improvements do not stall. Members of staff are enthusiastic about the new processes and associated learning to help keep pupils safe.
- Leaders and trustees undertake regular monitoring of the management and delivery of the boarding provision. Staff report that the pastoral lead, headteacher and trustees make regular visits to the boarding houses. The pastoral lead has weekly meetings with house masters and mistresses and carries out inspections of the boarding houses.
- Although continuing work is underway to improve processes, recording and oversight of safeguarding case management, there is no management oversight of the counsellors' written records to ensure that the well-being and safety of pupils are being promoted.
- The standards in this part are unmet.

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

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

## School details

Unique reference number	121735
Social care unique reference number	SC007916
DfE registration number	815/6006
Inspection number	10177562

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

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	A boarding school with religious character
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	481
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	225
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	384
Proprietor	St Laurence Education Trust
Chair	Edward Sparrow
Headteacher	Robin Dyer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,374
Annual fees (boarders)	£36,486
Telephone number	01439 766000
Website	<a href="http://www.ampleforth.org.uk/college">www.ampleforth.org.uk/college</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@ampleforth.org.uk">head@ampleforth.org.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected



## **Information about this school**

- A new trustee for safeguarding and a new designated safeguarding lead have taken up post since the previous emergency inspection in September 2020.
- The headteacher is on a fixed-term contract until December 2022.
- The school is a Roman Catholic co-educational boarding and day school. It is situated within the grounds of the Benedictine Ampleforth Abbey. The main school building adjoins the abbey.
- The boarding provision consists of nine boarding houses on the Ampleforth site.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- Currently, eight pupils are being educated on site. The remainder of pupils are being educated remotely due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

## **Information about this inspection**

- This first monitoring inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection in September 2020.
- The school was notified of the inspection 30 minutes before the inspection team arrived on site.
- Ampleforth College was previously inspected by Ofsted on 24 and 25 September 2020. This was an emergency inspection commissioned by the DfE. Prior to this, the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) carried out a progress monitoring inspection at Ampleforth College in January 2020. During this inspection, the school was found to meet all of the standards checked. The school's last ISI integrated inspection of the school and boarding provision was on 22 to 25 January 2013. The last regulatory compliance inspection was conducted by ISI on 7 and 8 March 2018.
- The DfE did not require the school to submit an action plan following the emergency inspection on 24 and 25 September 2020.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the chair of trustees and other trustees, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the school's designated safeguarding lead. They also spoke with other adults in school, including deputy designated safeguarding leads, teachers, monks who are teachers, house masters and mistresses, counsellors and support staff. In addition, inspectors met with the CEO of an external agency supporting the school. Inspectors also met with four of the eight pupils being educated on site during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these meetings took place face to face and others took place online.
- Inspectors also evaluated a range of documents, including the school's own action plan, recruitment checks, welfare records, policies and two external safeguarding audits. In addition, the inspection team took note of the 465 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. An inspector checked the temperature of the water across the school.

- Prior to the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the safeguarding unit manager and the team manager for safeguarding from the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and a detective superintendent from North Yorkshire Police.

### **Inspection team**

Belita Scott, lead inspector	Senior Her Majesty's Inspector
Patricia Head	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michele Costello	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jamie Richardson	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Jane Titley	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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

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

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

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

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
  - 8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.

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

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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

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

- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

### **The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards**

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

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

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

**Standard 11 – Child protection**

11.1 The school ensures that:

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

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

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

13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.

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