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Ampleforth College

Ampleforth, York, North Yorkshire YO62 4ER

Inspection dates	11 to 14 October 2022
Overall outcome	**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

Boarding provision outcome	**The school meets 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, 7(a), 7(b), 8, 8(a) and 8(b)

■ At the previous inspection in November and December 2021, inspectors found that the school's arrangements for safeguarding were not effective. Leaders were not alert to a build-up of concerns about individual pupils. They did not take sufficient action to keep pupils safe from harm. Leaders did not always follow statutory guidance when a member of staff was dismissed. Staff were not all alert to the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with complex needs. The role of the school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) in safeguarding decisions was underdeveloped. There were also insufficient safeguards around who had access to the school site. Risk assessments designed to mitigate risks in this regard, and an information-sharing protocol between members of Ampleforth Abbey (the Abbey) and leaders at the school, were at an early stage of development at the previous inspection and had not had time to demonstrate their effectiveness.

■ At this inspection, inspectors found that the school's arrangements for safeguarding were much improved.

■ Leaders and governors have responded to the findings from the last inspection with considerable vigour and determination. With the support of staff, the welfare and safety of pupils are now a prominent feature of life at the school.

■ The separation of the school from the Abbey is much clearer. This has been reinforced by a physical boundary and unambiguous rules and expectations for pupils and staff, as well as monks residing in, or working at, the Abbey. Pupils and staff can articulate with confidence who should and should not be present on the school site. This is assisted by a well-established system to identify school staff and monks with access to the school site by using different coloured lanyards. Pupils understand the safeguarding systems

well. Staff and pupils are proactive and challenge others when lanyards are not immediately visible. Security staff patrol the vast school site, ensuring compliance with new ways of working by guiding pupils away from parts of the site where they should not be.

- The information-sharing protocol between the Abbey and the school has been ratified and in place since March 2022. Safeguarding leaders from the school and the Abbey meet regularly to share information that may help to protect pupils. The minutes from these meetings demonstrate that there is an open, transparent relationship between both organisations. Safeguarding discussions relating to monks who should not enter the school site are supplemented by detailed risk assessments. The risk assessments outline a range of appropriate measures which, when implemented effectively, support the school's stronger safeguarding arrangements. Risk assessments are appropriate and help to ensure pupils safety currently. However, leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to ensure the records of safeguarding meetings between the Abbey and the school include sufficient detail, providing leaders and governors the opportunity to scrutinise, challenge and strengthen further the safeguarding arrangements at the school.

- Pupils with complex needs and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well known to staff. Leaders have thought carefully about the needs of the most vulnerable pupils. They have introduced 'student welfare risk assessments' and leaders, including the SENCo, meet regularly to discuss pupils' needs. The heightened profile of vulnerable pupils across the school highlights to staff they should take steps to support pupils in lessons and when on activities away from school. For example, when planning educational visits, staff ensure they collect and evaluate relevant pupil information from a range of sources, including from house masters and house mistresses and medical information from those working in the infirmary. In this way, staff are better prepared to respond to emerging pupil issues or concerns when away from the school site.

- 99% of respondents to the pupil inspection questionnaire said that they feel safe when they are at school. Parents and carers feel that pupils are safe too. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of safeguarding matters and risks they may face at school and beyond are strong. The 'Christian Living' curriculum and lessons aimed at developing pupils' awareness of personal, social and health education matters help pupils appraise risk and promote the safeguarding culture in the school. Pupils' understanding of radicalisation and extremism is well developed. Similarly, pupils speak with confidence when asked about the dangers and risks associated with alcohol, drugs and grooming.

- Pupils know who they can speak to if they have a worry or concern. Staff understand well, the different signs that may indicate a pupil is at risk of harm or neglect. Staff are curious. They know not all pupils have the confidence to make a disclosure should they need to. Consequently, staff have developed trusting relationships with pupils. Any niggling doubts are reported to the designated safeguarding leader (DSL) or his deputies. Leaders have also introduced new and innovative ways for pupils to report a concern that incorporates the use of technology to report a concern anonymously via a quick response (QR) code. Swift action is taken by safeguarding leaders to follow-up on any concerns in line with the school's policies and agreed ways of working.

- Safeguarding policies take account of up-to-date guidance for schools and colleges, including the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance, 'Keeping children safe

in education' (2022). Policies are consulted on and shared widely so that all staff understand the relevant safeguarding information. Staff are required to complete weekly safeguarding quizzes linked to the safeguarding information they have received or recent training they have attended. Staff engagement is high, and some staff who made their views known to inspectors said that this approach helps them to keep in touch with emerging safeguarding risks or online trends that may pose a risk to pupils. Recently, leaders have simplified and shared statutory safeguarding information and related school policies to increase pupils' awareness of safeguarding matters that could affect them the most.

- Written records of safeguarding concerns and incidents are made in an appropriate and timely way. Staff use a recently introduced management information system to do this. They have received training and understand their role in ensuring information is recorded accurately and reported swiftly. A review of pupil files demonstrates that safeguarding leaders act quickly and involve other agencies and professionals as required.

- The school's arrangements to manage admissions are generally sound. The vast majority of pupils who leave the school's roll have their new destinations recorded. However, during the inspection, inspectors highlighted to leaders that the whereabouts of one pupil who had left the school was unknown. Further investigation confirmed that the pupil was safe and well, and on the roll of a new school. While some staff knew of this, others did not. There is a need to refine the school's systems and processes to ensure communication between staff in this regard is improved and that the chances of a pupil going missing from education are reduced.

- These standards are now met.

Paragraph 14

- At the previous inspection, inspectors found that pupils were not supervised sufficiently. This put pupils at risk of harm.

- The supervision of pupils has been strengthened considerably. Leaders and governors have invested significant resources into increasing the quantity and improving the quality of closed-circuit television (CCTV) across the school's grounds. CCTV images are monitored more often than in the past. Security staff meet fortnightly with the school's safeguarding leaders. This helps to inform and amend risk assessments and ways of working so that pupils' safety continues to be prioritised.

- Staff supervise pupils appropriately during social and free time as well as during lesson changeover. They are strategically positioned around the site. Pupils say this is a reassuring presence.

- Punctuality to lessons is improving, including for pupils in the sixth form. A swift start to lessons for all pupils is promoted by staff who are out and about. Additionally, if a pupil does not arrive to lessons within the first 10 minutes, teachers follow this up with an urgent email to the relevant housemaster or housemistress. Some older pupils use QR codes to register their attendance to free periods and study sessions. This ensures pupils are accounted for all of the time.

- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16(b)

- These standards were met at the previous inspection but were checked at the request of the DfE to confirm that the school continued to implement its risk assessment policy appropriately.

- The school's risk assessment policy and procedures are applied consistently. Leaders' actions to mitigate risks to pupils are thorough and regularly reviewed. Two predominant risk assessment policies provide an overview relating to how risk assessments should be created and reinforced. Risk assessments are specific, and have appropriate timescales and relevant actions. It is clear who is responsible for each risk assessment and who should complete each action within it. Risk assessments for the areas of concern at the previous inspection are in place, are understood and applied by staff and reviewed by senior leaders regularly.

- These standards were met at the time of the last inspection and continue to be met.

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

Paragraph 18(2)-18(3), 19(2)-19(3), 20(6)-20(6)(c) and 21(1)-21(7)

- The systems and processes to check the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with pupils are appropriate and follow statutory guidance.

- Senior leaders ensure they understand their responsibilities relating to safer recruitment. They and governors are appropriately trained.

- Regular checks are made on the school's single central register of recruitment checks. These include checks by professionals who are external to the school.

- The standards in this part were met at the time of the last inspection and continue to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding and child protection policies are easily accessible via the school's website. A wide range of safeguarding information is available for pupils and parents to view.

- The standards in this part were met at the time of the last inspection and continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)-34(1)(c) and 34(2)

- At the previous inspection, inspectors found that leaders had not ensured the independent school standards were met consistently.

- Leaders and governors have acted as the catalyst for significant change since the school's previous inspection. Together, they responded to the findings from the previous inspection carefully but with urgency. The steps outlined in the school's post-inspection action plan have been implemented in full.

- Governors possess a wide range of skills to be able to hold leaders and each other to account. Recent additions to the board of governors have strengthened governors' ability to review and evaluate the school's safeguarding culture. Induction for new governors is robust. Governors say that they were prepared well for their new role. Governors' understand the shortcomings from the last inspection and the detail within the school's action plan is strong. This helps governors ask incisive questions of leaders and to consistently challenge leaders to do even better.

- The SENCo is knowledgeable. Her sphere of influence and involvement in decisions affecting the most vulnerable pupils are far greater than they used to be. Leaders are now calling on advice and guidance from the SENCo more often. This ensures information pertaining to pupils with SEND is shared more widely and in a timely manner. Staff have benefited from attendance at a wide range of SEND training events, which are led by school staff and external professionals. This has, in part, helped improve staff's understanding of issues relating to harmful sexual behaviour as well as about how they can support pupils with SEND or complex needs.

- Leaders are proactive and seek external validation or advice relating to a wide range of safeguarding matters. Leaders attend safeguarding meetings and training led by the local authority. Safeguarding leaders work closely with the local authority designated officer (LADO). This ensures leaders receive and act on safeguarding advice and guidance in a timely manner. Information-sharing between the school and other agencies, including the local authority, is much improved.

- The DSL understands his role and responsibilities well. He is appropriately trained to be able to support pupils' safeguarding needs. The wider safeguarding team, including the deputy DSLs, work well together. They are experienced and possess a range of skills that complement one another. As a result, safeguarding leaders have effective oversight of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, they know vulnerable pupils well and they provide appropriate and frequent training to staff.

- Leaders have thought carefully about the training staff require to ensure pupils are safe. Leaders have planned, and led, comprehensive training sessions that relate to harmful sexual behaviour and also SEND. Staff have attended training, completed wider reading and engaged in meaningful discussions relating to a wide range of safeguarding themes. Staff report that the school's approach to continuing professional development is well considered, meets their needs appropriately and ensures they have the skills and knowledge required to protect pupils as well as they can.

- Leaders understand and carry out their responsibilities appropriately when it comes to safer recruitment. Leaders make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service as appropriate.

- The independent school standards are being met consistently. The standards in this part are now met.

The national minimum standards (2015) that were assessed during this inspection

Standard 11.1

- This standard was not met at the last inspection because leaders did not ensure that staff understood the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND. When concerns were known, plans to reduce risks were not effective. Leaders did not ensure that boarding

houses were secure, so that pupils would be safe, including at night. As a result of these failings, some pupils suffered harm.

- Leaders and staff now work together to safeguard pupils. Staff and leaders with knowledge of safeguarding and SEND provide appropriate advice to adults to enable them to support pupils with additional vulnerabilities. This includes responding to and reducing the impact of pupils' risks away from the classroom. As a result, boarding staff consistently provide the care and supervision that pupils need.

- The safeguarding team has been strengthened. Communication between this team and other leaders, including governors, is effective. Safeguarding staff are visible to the wider staff team, whose members trust them to act if they raise concerns.

- Staff know pupils well. They report any safeguarding concerns appropriately and without delay. Safeguarding leaders make referrals to external organisations promptly. Excellent relationships with partner agencies mean that pupils are protected and get the support or expert intervention they need quickly. Those pupils with identified risks in relation to interactions with others continue to receive pastoral support, including when they are not in school. Staff recognise that these pupils' needs are complex and require ongoing help.

- Pupils feel safe in school. They understand the improved security arrangements, which reassure them that staff will act if there is a problem. Pupils are confident to talk to trusted adults in school about their concerns. Pupils also support each other. For example, they speak to staff when they are worried about another pupil's emotional well-being.

- Risk assessments are now pertinent and effective. They are specific to the issues that matter most to pupils and have clear strategies to reduce the impact of risk. Staff contribute to the development of risk assessments and review their effectiveness often. This means that pupils' individual needs are always considered. As a result, the safeguarding support pupils receive is stronger than it has been.

- This standard is now met.

Standards 13.3 and 13.4

- This standard was not met at the last inspection because leaders did not ensure that staff had the knowledge to safeguard pupils consistently. Leaders did not understand the short-falls in their practice. Although progress had been made from the previous inspection in March 2021, it was not applied consistently. Leaders were not challenged effectively, and the necessary improvements were not made and sustained. As a result, staff did not provide pupils, including those with SEND, with the care that would keep them safe.

- Leaders understand their responsibility to safeguard pupils. Their knowledge of individual pupils' needs is impressive. Leaders' oversight of the wider staff team means that pupils are cared for by staff who have the skills to do this well. Leaders are committed to the development of safeguarding practice in the school but accept that there is still work to be done. However, they maintain their vigilance and work to ensure that changes that have been made are sustained.

- Governors provide effective support and challenge to the senior leadership team. Changes to the governing body that were underway at the last inspection are complete. Governors complete regular skills audits of their skills and experience. This has resulted in increased diversity and greater independence within the board of governors. Governors are

interested in the development of the boarding provision. This is helping to raise the profile of how pupils' needs are understood and met beyond the teaching day.

■ These standards are now met.

Standard 15.1

■ This standard was not met at the last inspection because leaders and staff did not understand or meet the needs of pupils beyond the classroom. Insufficient care was taken to protect pupils with SEND, and some suffered harm.

■ Leaders and staff undertake training to improve their knowledge and skills. Safeguarding leaders test staff knowledge, to ensure that learning is being embedded. The input for staff from the learning support team is considerable. This work has been transformative in helping staff to understand the issues for pupils with SEND. As a result of this work, staff are better equipped to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils, including when they are away from the classroom.

■ This standard is now met.

Standard 15.3

■ This standard was not met at the last inspection because vulnerable pupils, about whom concerns were known, were not supervised appropriately. In addition, poor levels of supervision and understanding of risk meant that pupils' whereabouts were not always known to staff. As a result, pupils suffered harm.

■ Pupils who might pose a risk to each other are given appropriate levels of supervision. This includes providing privacy for those pupils who need it. As a result of the input from the learning support team, staff understand these issues and plan effectively to minimise the potential for harm. Pupils are protected, while also being able to take part in school life.

■ Leaders have improved how pupils are monitored, including when they are moving around the setting after the school day ends. Supervision is balanced according to circumstances. As pupils grow older, they are given appropriate levels of responsibility. However, staff take action to reduce the risk of harm. This, combined with increased security arrangements, is contributing to pupils' safety at school.

■ This standard is now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. 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.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
    - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
    - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act5 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.
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.

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 the 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.
- 34(2) actively promote the well-being of pupils. For the purposes of paragraph (1)(c) "well-being" means well-being within the meaning of section 10(2) of the Children Act 2004.

The school now meets the following national minimum standards for boarding schools (2015)

■ Boarding schools: national minimum standards 11.1

– 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

■ Boarding schools: national minimum standards 13.3

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

■ Boarding schools: national minimum standards 13.4

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

■ Boarding schools: national minimum standards 15.1

– Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding.

■ Boarding schools: national minimum standards 15.3

– The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time are sufficient in number, training and experience for the age, number and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved.

School details

Unique reference number	121735
Social care unique reference number	SC007916
DfE registration number	815/6006
Inspection number	10246795

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	427
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	190
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	342
Proprietor	St Laurence Education Trust
Chair	Edward Sparrow
Headteacher	Robin Dyer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£27,750
Annual fees (boarders)	£39,900
Telephone number	01439 766000
Website	www.ampleforth.org.uk/college
Email address	head@ampleforth.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	30 November–3 December 2021

Information about this school

◻ The school is a Roman Catholic co-educational boarding and day school. It is situated adjacent to Ampleforth Abbey.

◻ The boarding provision consists of nine boarding houses on the Ampleforth site.

◻ The school does not use any alternative provision.

◻ The school is governed by the St Laurence Education Trust, an independent governing body established in 1997.

◻ Since the last inspection, several new governors have joined the board of governors. Additional leadership appointments have also been made to strengthen the school's approach to safeguarding pupils.

Information about this inspection

■ This 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.

■ The inspection was conducted without notice.

■ Inspectors met with the chair of the board of governors and other governors, both in person and virtually. Inspectors met with the headteacher, teaching, support and boarding staff, the DSL, head of boarding provision, security staff, pupils and the SENCo.

■ Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including risk assessments, safeguarding policies, the single central record, pupil case files and records of safeguarding incidents and concerns. Inspectors reviewed and evaluated the school's post-Ofsted action plan and considered a range of training resources as well as viewing recorded training sessions for staff linked to safeguarding and SEND.

■ Inspectors attended an after-school social event and toured the boarding houses.

■ Inspectors considered parents' views of the school through responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, free-text service and one email. They considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

■ Prior to the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the Safeguarding Unit Manager and LADO from the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership in addition to a detective chief inspector and detective superintendent from North Yorkshire Police. The purpose of this discussion was to ensure inspectors were informed of any safeguarding matters relating to the school or Abbey that had occurred since the last inspection in November and December 2021.

Inspection team

Lee Elliott, lead inspector	Senior His Majesty's Inspector
Michael Wardle	Senior His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Aitchison	Senior His Majesty's Inspector
Jane Titley	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Aaron Mcloughlin	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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