

Ampleforth College

St Laurence Education Trust

Ampleforth College, York YO62 4ER

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

This is a Roman Catholic co-educational boarding and day school, rooted in Benedictine values. The school is set in a rural location and has extensive grounds, which are used for pupils' activities. The school is adjacent to Ampleforth Abbey.

The school provides education for 399 pupils, from Year 7 to Year 13. Boys and girls attend the school in all year groups. The school has 312 pupils who board full time in eight boarding houses. In addition, all day pupils have bedrooms in boarding houses allocated to them. This allows ad-hoc boarding and enables day pupils to enjoy activities in the evenings and at weekends.

Each boarding house has a house master or house mistress in day-to-day charge. A range of other staff care for pupils, including academic tutors and matrons. A member of the senior leadership team, who is suitably experienced and qualified, holds overall responsibility for the boarding provision.

This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of the school.

Inspection dates: 27 to 29 September 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Date of last inspection: 30 November 2021

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children thoroughly enjoy boarding at this school. They identify with their individual boarding houses and the sense of shared community is clear. This helps children to settle when they start at the school. Children develop strong relationships with boarding house staff and each other. Children say that this is one of the best aspects of the school.

Children benefit from the range of learning and pastoral support available to them. Children can self-refer to the school counsellor or for support from the learning hub. Learning support staff attend meetings about children. They provide specialist input about children with vulnerabilities or special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps to ensure that children's risks are understood and the best support is provided.

Children make good progress with their education. They value having support from academic tutors in the boarding houses, which helps their learning. Many children who do not board stay at school into the evening to benefit from this help.

Children's physical health is well supported. Staff encourage children to lead healthy lifestyles. On-site qualified medical staff support children, including those with complex health needs. Clear communication between staff, children and their parents means that children consistently receive the care that they need.

Children take part in a wide range of activities. They choose from various opportunities, such as astronomy club, drama and playing sports. This means that there is something for everyone. Such activities provide children with a good balance to their educational studies. As well as having fun, children build positive memories and develop their social and other skills.

Boarding houses are well maintained, warm and comfortable. Children have space for quiet time and privacy, including those who share dormitory accommodation. There are appropriate levels of supervision from resident staff. This means that children who might be at risk of becoming unhappy are regularly seen and supported. Boarding houses are a home away from home. Staff provide the nurturing care that children would get from their own families.

Children are well prepared for the next steps of their lives. Staff talk to children about what they want to do next and provide guidance about achieving their goals. Those who are less certain about their options have the space to talk through what might be of interest. Individualised support continues to be available to children once they leave school. This is reassuring to children and their families.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Safeguarding is woven through all aspects of the school. All staff receive a great deal of safeguarding training, regardless of their roles in school. Boarding staff contribute to children's safeguarding meetings. A sense of shared accountability underpins a strong safeguarding culture. This helps to keep children safe in and away from the school.

Safeguarding knowledge and practice are enhanced by the effective use of case recording systems. Good-quality records enable leaders to analyse children's individual patterns and trends. This leads to early support being identified quickly. As a result, the need for higher level intervention is reducing.

Children's behaviour is generally very good. Children respond positively to high expectations and clear, consistent boundaries. Children learn about respectful relationships and consent in lessons and during house discussions. Incidents such as homophobic or racist bullying, and unwanted sexual behaviour, are uncommon. Children know that there is no tolerance for such behaviour. They report concerns to staff, confident that action will be taken. There is a significant educative response to perpetrators. Repeat offending is infrequent, which indicates that the school's response is effective.

Health and safety systems and checks are strong. There are new arrangements for ensuring the security of the site, including the boarding houses. A fence separating the school from the adjoining areas has been installed. Children understand the limitations on where they can go in the school grounds. They know that this is about their safety, and they respect these boundaries.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and staff are committed to ensuring that children flourish in this school. The new headteacher has implemented changes that have been well received by staff, children and their families. There is an emphasis on collaboration across the school. The well-being of children is at the centre of all planning and decision-making. This helps children to fulfil their potential.

Senior boarding house staff are strong leaders in the boarding provision. They take great pride in their houses and children share this perspective. House leaders have high standards and aspirations for children and lead other staff by their example. Children recognise the high regard that house leaders have for them. This helps them to respond positively to the care that they receive.

Senior leaders encourage boarding house staff to take responsibility for developments in boarding houses. This helps those staff to feel valued. The headteacher wants staff to flourish, as well as children, and there is an emphasis on staff's well-being. Staff appreciate this. There has been a low turnover of staff in

boarding houses in the last year. This means that children are being cared for by familiar adults who understand and meet their needs well.

Leaders encourage children to provide their views about their experiences. House council meetings take place regularly and are led by children. They enable everyone to influence developments in the boarding houses as well as in the wider school. Children's views lead to changes as varied as the food provided in the school refectory to resolving difficulties in the house. Children's views are taken very seriously, which helps them to develop confidence in their right to be heard.

Staff receive the training and support that they need to perform well. This includes significant learning about children with SEND. This provides staff with the knowledge and skills to understand and meet the needs of all children. Staff are encouraged to identify and undertake new training. For example, a member of staff learned about developing healthy sleep habits. As a result, changes were made to children's night-time routines. These were generally well received and are now embedded in all boarding houses.

Senior leaders are well supported by the governing body. The governance structure has changed in the last year. There is a renewed focus on establishing links with other schools, to help promote ongoing developments. New governors have been recruited to augment the skills of existing members. Governors are active around the school, including talking to children in boarding time. They are deeply committed to ensuring that recent progress is maintained and further improved.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Boarding school details

Social care unique reference number: SC007916

Headteacher: Peter Roberts

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspectors

Jane Titley, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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