



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

Ampleforth College

January 2020



School's details

College	Ampleforth College			
DfE number	815/6006			
Registered charity number	1063808			
Address	Ampleforth College Ampleforth York North Yorkshire YO62 4ER			
Telephone number	01439 766800			
Email address	headteacher@ampleforth.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Robin Dyer			
Chair of governors	Mr Edward Sparrow			
Age range	13 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	482			
	Day pupils	90	Boarders	392
	Seniors	254	Sixth Form	228
Date of visit	29 January 2020			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Ampleforth College is a Roman Catholic co-educational boarding and day school situated in Ampleforth, North Yorkshire, adjacent to the Benedictine Ampleforth Abbey. The St Laurence Education Trust (SLET) oversees the school, together with its preparatory school, St Martin's, located three miles away. It educates pupils from the ages thirteen to nineteen years, most of whom board in one of nine boarding houses. One pupil has an education, health and care plan. There are 176 pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, all of whom receive specialist additional help. English is an additional language for 88 pupils, of whom 56 receive support for their English. A new headmaster has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- 1.2 The previous ISI regulatory compliance inspection was in March 2018 and progress monitoring inspections took place in November 2018 and May 2019.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.3 This was an unannounced progress monitoring visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the progress monitoring visit of May 2019.

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8 (safeguarding); NMS 11	Met
Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour); NMS 12	Met
Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying); NMS 12	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32 (1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints); NMS 18	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS13	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 11]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school meets the standards.
- 2.4 Safeguarding procedures in the school are now more robust. This follows a period of substantial organisational change within the SLET and the senior leadership of the school, as a result of the recent regulatory and safeguarding failures. The school has developed a thorough action plan to address the failings of the last inspection and evidence shows that those actions have been carefully implemented and completed. The school also recognises that many aspects are on-going and there is a need to ensure they are fully embedded. A new headmaster has been appointed with the appropriate skills and experience to build and develop school leadership and lead a safeguarding cultural change. A new and substantially enlarged board of trustees has been appointed, with a clearly defined responsibility and remit for safeguarding. Effective, consistent communication has been established between the trustees and senior leadership. There is a recognition that lessons must be learned from past regulatory failures.
- 2.5 The leadership structure has been enhanced and rationalised, to ensure clarity for all staff as to the lines of accountability and responsibility on all matters of safeguarding. A new senior leadership team (SLT) has been appointed with specific responsibilities. These structures are clearly reflected in reviewed and updated policies, in order to support the effective application of safeguarding in the school. The safeguarding policy has been strengthened and the arrangements made to safeguard pupils pay due regard to current statutory guidance and that of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP). The policy is further supported by details of Prevent duty guidance, safer recruitment, a staff code of conduct, whistleblowing procedures, e-safety and children missing in education.
- 2.6 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has recently been appointed to the status of deputy head, holds the position full time and has no other delegated responsibilities. A team of deputy DSLs (DDSLs) work under the direction of the DSL. There is a support network for the DSL and DDSLs through the director of safeguarding. The director of safeguarding oversees safeguarding across all the works of Ampleforth and collaborates closely with the DSL on matters relating to the school. The director continues to work closely with the interim safeguarding manager who is working with a colleague from the Charity Commission. A pastoral hub has been established to act as a base for the DSL team and senior pastoral school staff, enabling co-ordination of their work and ensuring that all concerns are discussed and investigated. Staff and pupils report that they feel welcome in the hub and can visit, if they wish, to discuss a personal issue or to raise a concern should the need arise.
- 2.7 The school have referred almost all concerns to the NYSCP in a timely manner; informal advice is sought as appropriate. Evidence from the visit concludes that there was a delay in reporting a single incident to the DSL but, once highlighted, the DSL immediately referred to the NYSCP and their advice was correctly followed. This delay is currently being investigated in line with NYSCP guidance and further training has been given to the staff to emphasise the policy and procedure. A new system for logging concerns ensures that all incidents, no matter how small, are suitably recorded by staff; entries

are categorised, to enable appropriate tracking and oversight, such as for specific types of peer-on-peer abuse. Documentation is stored securely and accurately records the stages of investigation with dates, all statements and correspondence, resulting outcomes and follow up procedures. Evidence shows that the school has fully co-operated with the local authorities when required.

- 2.8 The SLT, which includes the DSL and other key staff, as well as key staff at St Martin's, have had appropriate training in safeguarding, which is fully in line with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 (KCSIE). This includes peer on peer abuse, sexual violence and harassment, bullying, behaviour and the correct application of policies in these areas. All staff are required to confirm that they have read and understood the most recent version of KCSIE. Training has emphasised the requirement for reporting and referral to local safeguarding agencies and has made it clear that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Specialist training has been provided to staff with key responsibilities, for example in mental health, special educational needs and e-safety. A record of suitable staff training is maintained and regularly monitored by the DSL team.
- 2.9 Twice-weekly briefings for all teaching staff provide updates on core compliance procedures, including how to record and report concerns, which strengthen the safeguarding culture. Regular safeguarding briefings are held for support staff which cover how to report safeguarding and welfare issues. In addition, boarding staff and key pastoral staff meet on a weekly basis with the deputy head pastoral and wellbeing; the DSL is available to attend these meetings for the discussion of safeguarding matters. Minutes are available to all staff as a permanent record and ensure that absent staff are updated. Interviews with staff confirmed that they have a clear understanding of how to report any concerns.
- 2.10 As part of the drive by senior leadership to improve the culture for safeguarding in the school, whole school assemblies have been introduced and take place once a week, which have helped bring the school community together. These provide opportunities for the SLT to talk to pupils about all aspects of keeping each other safe. Pupils have frequent training in e-safety, the behaviour code of conduct, anti-bullying and the need to talk and report any concerns. Pupils and staff report that there is now a more open culture based on listening to children. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme also provides appropriate guidance for pupils. All pupils interviewed report feeling safe in the school and in their boarding houses. They appreciate a new email address, which is anonymous and offers advice should they need help in school. Older pupils spoke about the many support mechanisms now in place, such as the 'Time to Talk' day on mental health, the open chaplaincy and coffee sessions, which all help if they have concerns.
- 2.11 Specialist training on safer recruitment has been provided to key staff. An internal audit has been undertaken to ensure on-going stringent procedures for the issuing of references, including for internal appointments. Regular monitoring by senior leaders and trustees ensures that the school's new Issuing of References Policy continues to be followed, such as the checking of drafted references for accuracy and ensuring that personal files have been checked for historical concerns or any discipline matters that needs to be included. Staff have been informed that it would be considered a disciplinary offence to provide a reference to any employee or volunteer outside of the reference policy and procedure.
- 2.12 Evidence suggests that safeguarding is now more co-ordinated between the school and the abbey, and that those in key roles in both charities are building an effective working relationship. For example, SLET safeguarding concerns are logged by both the director of safeguarding and the school DSL. These are reviewed by a safeguarding committee and the trustees. If a failure to follow safeguarding protocols is observed, whether in the abbey or the school, immediate follow up re-emphasises the policy and procedures and further training is given. A safeguarding report is provided for trustees at every board meeting and the director of safeguarding has introduced a safeguarding 'dashboard'

which provides the trustees with full safeguarding oversight. Minutes of trustee meetings show that appropriate questions and challenges are provided by trustees at their meetings.

- 2.13 A safeguarding development plan has been implemented, which is monitored and reviewed by the safeguarding committee, a body which operates across the abbey and the school. This plan shows that the school is being pro-active in its attention to safeguarding, especially with regard to future training needs and close monitoring. A new operational safeguarding commission, which oversees safeguarding matters in the monastery and reports any matter which might impact the school to the safeguarding committee, is in place, although the full effectiveness of the commission is still undetermined at this current time, given its recent instigation. The school understands that continual review and monitoring of safeguarding implementation is required, and the importance of ensuring that the new arrangements are fully embedded in the school's culture.
- 2.14 The inspectors judged that the school has appropriately addressed the actions required by the previous inspection.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9; NMS 12]

- 2.15 The school meets the standards.
- 2.16 The school has revised and updated its policies for behaviour, bullying, sanctions and reward and these are appropriate to protect the welfare of its pupils. These procedures are appropriately implemented, and any behaviour which represents a risk to a pupil's welfare has been correctly treated as a safeguarding matter. The policies emphasise the need for communicating with pupils about behavioural matters and the focus on the 'voice of the child' has been strengthened as a result. Documents contain suitable strategies for supporting both staff and pupils and emphasise new behavioural 'red lines' over which no one can cross.
- 2.17 The leadership structure has improved and a new member of the SLT has been appointed to lead on disciplinary matters. This re-structuring provides all staff with a clear direction on the lines of accountability and responsibility on all matters for behaviour. Regular meetings and briefings of academic staff, ensure that professional expectations regarding behaviour management are made clear and kept in high profile. In addition, there are further weekly meetings of senior boarding staff and the senior pastoral team, to monitor staff practice when dealing with behaviour issues.
- 2.18 The SLT and other key staff have received training on the correct implementation of the school's behaviour policies and procedures. Academic staff have been given additional training to support general behaviour management; individual mentoring for staff is in place to help with the management of any difficult individuals or groups of pupils. Attention has been paid in training to ensure that sanctions are well-defined, fully explained and appropriate. The use of different scenarios within the training course were considered particularly useful by staff. Improved training and monitoring of information and communication technology has been introduced to prevent inappropriate use of technology by pupils; a new mobile phone policy has been well received by parents.
- 2.19 All behaviour and discipline-related concerns are logged by staff on the central electronic system, no matter how small, and are reviewed at daily, minuted SLT meetings. New centralised ways of recording behaviour and discipline incidents have ensured greater consistency, clarity of action and record keeping, leading to more accurate analysis of data, trends and follow up. The staff interviewed were able to outline their training on how this system is used. Parents are kept informed of any infringements and the school involves parents in matters of a serious nature.
- 2.20 Many of the disciplinary issues are handled by the deputy head with the support of the senior pastoral leadership and senior boarding staff, often through talking to pupils about correct behaviour;

education in this area is considered just as important as giving sanctions. 'Ampleforth Points' (APs) are awarded for positive behaviour, so that it is easier to be rewarded for small things which then count towards bigger rewards. Clearer sanctions have been introduced so that pupils know what to expect; sanction points also build up before major sanctions are given. This approach has required the training of staff and pupils, as a lot of sanctions are accompanied by coaching of behaviour and reflection.

- 2.21 House staff interviewed confirmed that stronger line management has been introduced, with suitable support regarding the management of disciplinary issues, with more serious incidents being handled by the SLT instead of at house level. An analysis of logged behaviour concerns since the previous inspection shows that minor incidents have increased, due to staff being required to report everything, but major incidents have declined. Most sanctions currently recorded include infringements relating to academic concerns, poor or inappropriate language, smoking and alcohol. There is a noticeable decline in alcohol concerns since the previous inspection. The trustees receive a behaviour report for discussion and review at their meetings.
- 2.22 Pupils interviewed report that they thought behaviour in the school was good and had improved since the new sanctions and rewards policy was introduced, which they said is fair and popular. They feel motivated by the gaining of APs for good behaviour and enjoy the rewards they receive.
- 2.23 The inspectors judged that the school has appropriately addressed the actions required by the previous inspection.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10; NMS 12]

- 2.24 The school meets the standards.
- 2.25 The school has a new and suitable anti-bullying policy available to parents, which refers to guidance, including KCSIE 2019. The policy is part of the new suite of behaviour and safeguarding policies and it is effectively implemented. It includes sufficient guidance for staff, pupils and parents on how to deal with bullying incidents. Measures to combat cyber-bullying are included and information regarding sexual violence and sexual harassment and peer on peer abuse is in line with the guidance of KCSIE 2019. Additionally, the school provides education and advice on these matters to pupils through the PSHE programme.
- 2.26 The SLT, including the DSL and other key staff such as senior boarding staff, have received appropriate training on the school policy. This includes the correct identification and recording of bullying behaviour, and in particular, peer on peer abuse. The trustees have received a report on staff training. Staff report that this training is re-visited regularly at staff briefings and meetings. Appropriate training has been undertaken by house matrons. This has enabled matrons to understand more effectively the issues for the pupils they support. When interviewed, staff reported the importance of listening to pupils and observing changes in their behaviour. Suitable pupil support systems have been applied to both the victim and the perpetrator when bullying incidents have been identified.
- 2.27 The new senior leadership structure is clear as to the lines of accountability and responsibility on all matters for bullying. All incidents are recorded centrally and are monitored daily by the senior pastoral leadership and the DSLs. The bullying log shows some incidents that are minor, such as unkind words and these are appropriately being handled and monitored. At the time of the visit, current bullying incidents were viewed as potential safeguarding concerns. Evidence shows that sanctions applied are appropriately serious and in line with the behaviour and sanctions policy. Pupils report that sanctions for bullying are now much stricter and they talked about it being a 'red line' that cannot be crossed. Parents are always kept informed and involved in all cases of bullying.
- 2.28 The school has acknowledged a poor history of dealing with some incidents in the past, especially in some boarding houses. An action plan to counteract poor behaviour and bullying has been introduced,

which involves strengthening supervisory processes by the house staff and the consideration of best practice when communicating rules, boundaries and behaviour expectations. Anonymous regular surveys are being set up within the house to assess the culture change. Support and mentoring of house staff also play a key part in improving the culture in the house. This programme of auditing house culture has recently begun in other boarding houses. At the time of the inspection there was limited evidence of how the recommendations from the audits will be followed up and how the evaluation for their success will be carried out.

- 2.29 Evidence shows that the senior leadership has been clear in its communications to parents, staff and pupils, that bullying will not be tolerated. The key focus is to concentrate on embedding and re-connecting with the Benedictine values of respect, integrity, stewardship and equilibrium and recognising that the school must learn from its mistakes in the past.
- 2.30 Inspectors judged that the school had satisfactorily completed the actions required from the previous inspection.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32 (1)(c)]

- 2.31 The school meets the requirement for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33; NMS 18]

- 2.32 The school meets the standards.
- 2.33 The school has a suitable complaint procedure that has recently been reviewed to make it a quicker and more effective process. The procedure is readily available to parents and they are informed of the complaints process if they contact the school with a concern.
- 2.34 Parental complaints are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. There have been four formal complaints since the previous inspection and all have been processed within the stated time scales, including one panel hearing. An explanation is given to parents if timescales need to be extended and the reasons for the extension.
- 2.35 Trustees have been trained in the new complaint procedure and they understand their responsibilities within the process. Training has been undertaken by the SLT and senior boarding staff to ensure that there is clear understanding of expected actions, timescales and reporting lines and how the procedure should be applied with other policies, in matters relating to behaviour, anti-bullying, peer on peer abuse and safeguarding. Staff have been trained to recognise complaints and they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities with regard to dealing with them through their line manager.
- 2.36 Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision. The senior leadership maintains a log of formal complaints which is reviewed each term by trustees to ensure that policy and procedure is followed. Other complaints are appropriately logged centrally and reviewed to assess that they have been suitably handled.
- 2.37 The school has acknowledged the failings in the complaints procedure in the past and the trustees and leadership have endeavoured to correct the past failings with the parents involved. Any recommendations arising as a result of the findings of these complaints have been actioned.
- 2.38 The inspection was satisfied that the school has appropriately completed the actions required from the previous inspection.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 13]

- 2.39 The school meets the standards.
- 2.40 The new senior leadership, recruited in September 2019 demonstrate the appropriate skills and experience to lead culture change in the school. Senior leadership receive appropriate support from the newly structured trustee body, who have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and actively promote the well-being of the pupils. A new chair of trustees has been appointed, alongside a new designated safeguarding trustee who has a suitable professional background in safeguarding. The safeguarding trustee visits the school regularly to meet with the DSL and key staff and to monitor policies and procedures.
- 2.41 New trustees have received appropriate induction training, and all trustees have been re-trained in safeguarding, complaints, the relevant regulatory requirements. Inspection evidence suggests that trustees are rigorous in holding the school leadership to account in understanding and executing their responsibilities, specifically in relation to safeguarding and well-being of pupils, ensuring that any issues are addressed and remedied as a priority. Better communication has been established between the trustees and the SLT and safeguarding reports are provided for all SLET meetings. Minutes show that there is a full and effective discussion of safeguarding and other concerns with robust questioning.
- 2.42 Under strong direction from the senior leadership a new SLT structure has been established including a full-time DSL. Policies and procedures have been reviewed and changed. Weekly communications between the senior leadership and the staff have ensured that clarity has been provided as to the lines of accountability on all matters especially relating to safeguarding and behaviour. Effective line management of senior boarding staff has been established in the management of houses, safeguarding practice and disciplinary issues. Suitable support and mentoring is given by the appropriate member of the SLT.
- 2.43 Training has been provided to the SLT and all staff on new policies and procedures especially in safeguarding and behaviour management. Training covers all relevant aspects of statutory guidance. All members of leadership and management and senior boarding staff have received training to ensure they have the knowledge and skills needed to promote the welfare of pupils with regard to peer-on-peer abuse, bullying, pupil behaviour, mental health and e-safety. The reporting of concerns is well documented and closely monitored.
- 2.44 The school action plan to remedy the failings of the last inspection has been completed satisfactorily. Some aspects of the plan are on-going and a review process is in place to remedy any weaknesses. Interviews with staff confirm that the school has a very different environment under the new management. The trustees and senior leaders recognise that many of the new procedures need to be fully embedded and must be kept under review.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this visit, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and no further action is required as a result of this visit.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and talked to members of the trustees. They held discussions with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.