

Steyning Grammar School

Address: Shooting Field, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3RX

Unique reference number (URN): 148221

Inspection report: 3 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils progress steadily through the curriculum. Their work shows they build securely on prior learning and apply this knowledge accurately. Pupils have the skills and knowledge they need for their next steps. They generally achieve well in national tests, particularly in subjects such as mathematics and science. Pupils are also improving in subjects with historically lower outcomes, and their results are now broadly in line with national averages. On the whole, pupils write confidently and have age-appropriate mathematical knowledge, which they apply effectively in their work.

Pupils with barriers to learning make steady progress from their starting points. They develop stage-appropriate skills and knowledge across the curriculum. This is evident in their work and in their accurate recall of learning. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well in national tests.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils generally attend well. Attendance is improving over time. Persistent absence remains high, but it has improved significantly in the last few years. Leaders analyse attendance carefully. This helps them to identify patterns and trends. Leaders now analyse this information with greater precision to identify pupils whose attendance is declining. This helps staff to identify pupils and families who may need additional help. This work is effective and helps pupils to attend more frequently.

Behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection. One pupil said that behaviour had 'transformed'. This is a view shared by many. Leaders have established well-designed routines and high expectations. Staff apply these consistently well. This helps pupils to meet these high standards. As a result, the school is a calm environment. Pupils are kind, courteous and have warm and positive relationships with staff. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. The vast majority of pupils concentrate well on their work. This helps to create a positive and purposeful atmosphere in the classroom. Leaders have clear oversight of behaviour in the school. They track incidents carefully and the school responds to them swiftly. This helps pupils to feel safe and well supported.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate picture of teaching in the school. They recognise where teaching is most effective and where practice could benefit from further refinement. They ensure staff have the training they need. Consequently, teaching is improving swiftly. The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that builds towards clear end points. Staff have identified the skills and knowledge they want pupils to learn precisely. Pupils build on their prior knowledge over time.

Teachers generally teach the curriculum well. They have appropriate subject knowledge and explain learning clearly. Teachers design tasks that help pupils to develop the key skills and knowledge they need. In a small number of lessons, these tasks are less engaging. This

means pupils do not always deepen their knowledge as well as they could. The school has well-designed processes to help those pupils who arrive with gaps in their foundational knowledge. This helps pupils to catch up quickly. Teachers typically adapt learning to carefully match the needs of pupils. This helps all pupils to learn the skills and knowledge they need.

Staff know pupils' needs well and adapt learning through targeted adult support and careful grouping. This ensures that pupils can access tasks matched to their needs. Teachers make systematic checks on pupils' understanding. This helps staff to address gaps in learning quickly and to help pupils move on. Teachers provide clear feedback on pupils' work. As a result, pupils revisit content that has been previously taught and embed their learning effectively.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school knows its pupils well. Leaders use accurate monitoring to identify the barriers that pupils may face. Leaders analyse this information thoughtfully and use it to shape the support pupils receive. Leaders also use this analysis to provide training that equips staff to meet pupils' changing needs. Staff apply this training well and deliver the support that pupils require.

Teachers generally adapt learning effectively. The most effective practice is deeply personalised. This helps staff to break down pupils' individual barriers swiftly. The school enhances this work with a range of well-designed interventions. Skilled staff deliver these consistently well. As a result, pupils with barriers to learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make clear progress from their starting points. Leaders have appropriate oversight of this work and the impact of interventions.

The school has a carefully planned pupil premium strategy. Leaders have clearly identified challenges that disadvantaged pupils may face and address these effectively. The school has used additional funding thoughtfully. This support helps these pupils to achieve well. Leaders make effective use of alternative provision. This helps pupils to engage positively with their learning. Leaders ensure there are careful checks on pupils while they attend these placements. This helps leaders to amend pupils' support as needed.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders work tirelessly to improve the school. The impact of this is evident throughout the school. School leaders work closely with trust leaders to strengthen key processes and routines, which are becoming increasingly well established. Leaders have a precise understanding of the school and use this insight to shape a comprehensive and well-designed school improvement plan. They monitor this carefully and adapt it as the school's needs evolve.

Staff enjoy working at the school and feel well supported by leaders. They work together positively in the best interests of pupils. Staff appreciate the consideration that leaders give to their welfare and workload. This helps staff feel a clear sense of belonging. The school provides parents with regular opportunities to share their views. Leaders take these views seriously as they build consensus and shape future plans.

Governors and trustees are professional and thoughtful in their work. They maintain a clear understanding of the school through robust monitoring systems, which keep them well informed. As a result, they offer leaders high levels of challenge and support. Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They have a clear understanding of the school's pupil premium strategy and share leaders' high ambition for all pupils. Leaders ensure that all staff have access to high-quality professional learning, planned precisely to meet their needs.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school has an ambitious personal development programme that extends beyond the classroom. Pupils take part in a range of well-designed trips and visits that deepen their understanding of the subjects they study and help develop new skills. Pupils speak positively about these experiences. The school also provides an extensive choice of extra-curricular clubs, which pupils enjoy and attend in high numbers. Leaders monitor participation carefully and remove financial barriers so that disadvantaged pupils can take part fully. Leaders use this information to plan thoughtfully and ensure that all pupils benefit from the school's wider offer.

Character education sits at the heart of the school's ethos. Staff encourage pupils to show the school's values, such as zest, in their work and behaviour. Pupils respond well and enjoy earning rewards for their efforts. As a result, they feel like valued members of the school community. This contributes to the school's positive behaviour culture.

The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is carefully planned. Pupils learn the essential knowledge they need to stay safe online and in the wider community. Well-trained staff deliver PSHE consistently, helping pupils to understand important concepts such as democracy and consent. However, pupils' recall of this learning sometimes lacks detail.

The school provides a well-designed programme to help pupils develop a broad understanding of different views and cultures. Pupils engage positively with this work, which is reflected in their mature attitudes to difference and diversity. They also benefit from an effective careers programme. Pupils receive clear guidance about their next steps, supported by visits to employers or universities. This prepares pupils well for future choices.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that meets the changing needs of students. Staff refine this curriculum carefully and ensure that students work towards a range of ambitious qualifications. The curriculum is typically taught well. Staff have appropriate subject knowledge. They help students develop the skills and knowledge they need to work independently. This enables them to apply their learning effectively. Leaders make sure that students who need additional help to access the curriculum receive timely support. This helps to break down barriers to their learning. As a result, students make clear and sustained progress from their starting points.

Students generally achieve well in their studies. Outcomes have become increasingly consistent as the curriculum has strengthened. The school's results in national tests

continue to improve and are now broadly in line with national averages. Students benefit from a range of well-designed activities that enrich their learning. These include skilled careers advice and meaningful workplace experiences. This support helps students feel well prepared for their next steps, whether they continue in education or move into employment. They value the insight they gain from work experience and many go on to succeed in higher education.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils' individual needs are a priority for staff at this caring school. 'We are not just a number,' one pupil said, and this is a view shared by many. Pupils feel well supported, which helps them to learn and behave well. They have trusted adults they can speak to and feel confident that staff will address any concerns. This helps pupils feel happy and safe. Older students, including those in the sixth form, act as positive role models and contribute strongly to the school's caring and respectful culture.

The school has prioritised pupils' character development. Pupils show high levels of resilience and independence and build positive relationships with staff. These relationships are clear in the warm and friendly conversations they hold with adults. Pupils excitedly discuss their learning or the extra-curricular activities they enjoy. All pupils have opportunities to represent the school, for example in sporting or arts events. Pupils are increasingly proud to attend Steyning.

Pupils say that behaviour has improved significantly, and this is evident in the calm and orderly classrooms and corridors. Pupils are polite and courteous. They work well with staff and respond quickly to reminders of the school's expectations. They enjoy learning and this is clear in the focused and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Pupils work hard and share their learning confidently. They say that bullying is very rare and that they feel confident to raise concerns with staff. They are respectful and considerate of others.

Pupils' achievement is improving over time. They learn the skills and knowledge they need. Their work shows that they build on their prior learning in increasingly sophisticated ways. As a result, pupils typically achieve well in national tests. Pupils who have barriers to learning receive effective support, and this helps them to achieve well alongside their peers.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all teachers consistently select and design tasks that deepen pupils' learning across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils have more opportunities to deepen and extend their understanding of the important concepts they learn in personal, social and health education.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of the Bohunt Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Neil Strowger, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alistair Halliday.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The school has a boarding provision. The inspection team only inspected the education provision.

The inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector also met with the CEO and those responsible for governance, including the trust governance professional. The inspection team also spoke to indicative groups of staff and pupils during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education, qualifications and apprenticeships.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. Its last Section 48 inspection took place in May 2024.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses 3 registered alternative provisions and 6 unregistered provisions.

The school leadership team has changed since the last inspection.

Headteacher: Aidan Timmons

Lead inspector:

Gavin Thomas, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Liz Bowes, Ofsted Inspector

Keith Pailthorpe, Ofsted Inspector

Anne Cullum, Ofsted Inspector

Chris Sykes, Ofsted Inspector

James Freeston, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 3 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,944

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

2,455

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

14.12%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.88%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

19.91%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	49.3%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	43.9%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	44.8%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	48.7	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45.1	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	46.6	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.02	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.01	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	28.6%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	20.5%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	12.8%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	35.2	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33.4	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	27.9	35.0	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.44	-0.57	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	-0.98	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	28.6%	53.1%	-24.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	20.5%	53.1%	-32.6 pp
2022/23 (final)	12.8%	52.4%	-39.7 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	35.2	50.4	-15.2
2023/24 (final)	33.4	50.0	-16.6
2022/23 (final)	27.9	50.3	-22.4

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.44	0.16	-0.60
2022/23 (final)	-0.98	0.17	-1.15

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	92%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	94%	93%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	29.72	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	29.60	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	31.29	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	0.0	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.1	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	8.8%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	8.5%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	10.2%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	25.0%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	25.5%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	31.9%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard 

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted



© Crown copyright