

Steyning Grammar School

Bohunt Education Trust

Steyning Grammar School, Church Street, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3LB.

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Steyning Grammar is a Church of England voluntary controlled, secondary comprehensive school and is part of the Bohunt Education Trust. It is situated in rural Sussex with boarding located on the Church Street campus near Steyning town centre. There are two boarding houses at the school.

At the time of the inspection, there were 46 boarders ranging in age from 14 to 18 years.

The Head of Boarding has been in post since September 2025.

The inspectors only inspected the boarding provision.

Inspection dates: 2 to 4 December 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The boarding school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 4 October 2022

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The boarding provision is a central strength of the school, supporting students to flourish academically, socially and personally. The school's model of education underpins the school's ethos, promoting moral values, resilience, independence and cultural awareness. Boarding students often act as role models for peers in the day school. Boarding students say they enjoy attending the boarding provision and feel listened to, heard, valued and respected by boarding staff and school leaders.

Student voice plays a significant and influential role within boarding and the wider school. Students have multiple avenues to share their ideas and suggestions, including daily gatherings, regular house meetings, informal conversations and scheduled meetings between students in leadership roles and the head of boarding. Students are unanimous in their belief that their voice matters and genuinely influences the day-to-day running of the boarding provision, for example in organising the end-of-year ball, weekend trips, afterschool activities, cultural celebrations and in marking traditional events.

Students who are new to boarding benefit from a comprehensive induction that helps them settle in, meet key staff, understand routines and know where to go for help. This ensures a smooth transition and reduces anxiety for those joining boarding for the first time.

Boarding staff know students extremely well and are skilled at identifying when individual students may need extra attention or support. Systems such as the vulnerability index, recorded pastoral interactions, and joint oversight with day-school tutors ensure that students receive prompt, wrap-around care and tailored interventions that they benefit from.

Students receive strong support as they plan for life beyond school. Staff take time to understand students' ambitions and help them prepare effectively for next steps. This level of personalised support ensures that all boarders feel confident and ready for their future pathways.

The school offers extensive enrichment opportunities, including faith exploration, community volunteering and intergenerational projects, all of which nurture the students' social responsibility and cultivate deep connections within and beyond the school community. Combined with strong pastoral care and academic support, these experiences allow boarding students to flourish and build achievable success through gradual, supported steps.

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

The boarding school's strong safeguarding culture ensures that student safety and wellbeing remain paramount. Well-trained, confident and vigilant staff respond promptly and thoroughly to any concerns, creating a secure and trusting environment where no issue is overlooked and students feel protected and supported.

When referrals to local authorities are required, the school's response reflects a strong commitment to partnership working and effective information sharing. The designated safeguarding lead manages each situation with efficiency and sensitivity, applying professional curiosity to consider relevant background information where appropriate. Although referrals are infrequent, the process is well understood across the staff team, contributing to a transparent safeguarding culture in which everyone is confident in their responsibilities and committed to ensuring student safety.

Robust safer recruitment practices ensure that all adults working within boarding are suitable and well prepared for their roles. Leaders use a range of carefully designed selection activities to assess candidates' skills and suitability, which has led to strong, successful appointments. This diligence extends not only to staff but also to guardians and volunteers, maintaining a consistent culture of safeguarding.

Staff, including those not directly involved in boarding, have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and how their roles contribute to the wellbeing and outcomes of students. They know exactly who to communicate with if concerns arise and demonstrate a shared passion for the success and welfare of students.

The health and wellbeing lead provides creative and accessible support. This includes drop-in sessions, informal time in the common room, a therapy dog and clear referral routes for additional help. Where needed, students can also access a trained counsellor, ensuring comprehensive emotional and psychological support.

The oversight of health and safety by the senior leadership is effective, with clear responsibilities at both operational and trust levels and robust monitoring through action plans, audits and regular checks. Statutory servicing of health and safety equipment and routine inspections are up to date, and risks are managed promptly. Students also play an active role in promoting safety, including seven students being trained as fire marshals.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders are ambitious, reflective and highly effective. A new headteacher and head of boarding have brought fresh energy, clear vision and strengthened strategic direction. The headteacher is closely involved in boarding, knowing students individually and maintaining a strong connection to the boarding community. Staff report strong confidence in the leadership team, feeling valued and listened to.

Leaders create a culture of warmth, respect and aspiration in which students and staff thrive.

The committed governing body maintains strong oversight. The school benefits from trust-level scrutiny, support and critical friendship to strengthen boarding practice. Induction for new staff is thorough and tailored, with reflective supervision supporting professional growth.

Individual boarding development plans are aspirational and sharply focused on what matters most for boarding students. They clearly prioritise the areas that will have the greatest effect on students' safety, experience and outcomes, demonstrating leaders' deep understanding of the boarding community.

Complaints processes have been strengthened since the last full inspection. There is now a clear chronology, supported by a consistent proforma that records actions taken to resolve any concerns. Complaints are managed swiftly and, in most cases, resolved without escalation. This reflects the positive and trusting relationships that house parents and the head of boarding have established with students and parents and means students are satisfied with the outcomes.

Parents express strong satisfaction with their children's boarding experience. They consistently identify the high level of staff support for boarders as a key strength. One parent reported that their child is healthier and happier since joining the boarding provision, while another highlighted that their child's medical needs have been met to an excellent standard by boarding staff.

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: SC042673

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Headteacher Aidan Timmons

Type of school: Boarding School

Telephone number: 01903 817601

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Inspectors

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Louise Webling, Social Care Inspector

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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