

Inspection of Steyning Grammar School

Shooting Field, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3RX

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are determined to ensure that all pupils benefit from their time in this very large school. They have ensured that the curriculum is designed and delivered well. Pupils gain the knowledge and skills that they need to be successful in a broad range of subjects. The taught curriculum is supplemented by over 60 clubs and other opportunities that extend pupils' learning. Many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, take part in these activities. Most pupils enjoy their learning and show application and effort in lessons. Many have positive relationships with staff and appreciate the support and encouragement that they receive.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The systems for managing behaviour are understood by pupils and staff. Despite this, the behaviour of a minority of pupils often falls short of the school's expectations. Lessons are sometimes disrupted and there are examples of antisocial behaviour outside of lessons. Most pupils say that they feel safe in school. But some pupils in key stage 4 feel less comfortable during lunchtimes and breaktimes. Some pupils express concerns about bullying and sexual harassment. Pupils know who to speak to in school if they need support with these issues. However, they sometimes choose not to and, instead, accept that unkind behaviour continues.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are right to prioritise raising expectations for pupils' behaviour. In many lessons and around the school, pupils conduct themselves well and are respectful. However, a significant minority of parents and pupils are concerned about behaviour. This is particularly the case in key stage 4. The school's policy and routines for managing behaviour are not always applied consistently. Low-level disruption in lessons is sometimes not dealt with effectively. Some pupils do not follow instructions from staff when moving around the school. Leaders are tackling these issues and are trying to change the culture in the school. However, their actions have not yet had enough impact.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The wide range of subjects available from Year 7 to Year 13, and the high-quality careers advice and guidance, prepare pupils well for their next steps in education. Curriculum leaders work with subject specialists from the multi-academy trust. Together, they have thought carefully about what pupils need to learn and they check that they have learned it. Pupils' learning is deepened through a range of educational visits and enrichment activities in each subject.

The curriculum is delivered well in most subjects, particularly in the sixth form. Staff have good subject knowledge. They understand the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. Teachers adapt learning when appropriate. Mobile technology is used widely to help pupils access the curriculum and learn independently. Leaders have

prioritised improving pupils' literacy skills. There is a sharp focus on ensuring that pupils who struggle to read confidently and competently are identified and provided with the rapid support that they need to improve.

Some pupils are missing out on education because they do not attend regularly enough. Of these pupils, a number are disadvantaged. These pupils do not achieve as well as their peers. The school is working with families and outside agencies to support pupils to attend school more regularly. This has led to improvements for individual pupils, although absence rates for some disadvantaged pupils remain high.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is now well planned and delivered. This includes in the sixth form. The PSHE programme includes how to form healthy relationships, online safety and British values. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is responsive to local issues and does not shy away from tackling sensitive subjects, such as consent. The extensive programme of extra-curricular activities builds pupils' character and allows them to pursue their own interests. High numbers of pupils participate in Duke of Edinburgh's Award schemes. Sixth-form students make a valuable contribution to the school. They organise fundraising events for charities, such as the 'jail break' day across West Sussex and Brighton. Student ambassadors help out around the school and support younger pupils in lessons.

The school has been through a period of instability and transition. Trustees, leaders and most staff share in the clear vision and sense of direction that now exist. The trust is providing school leaders and the new local governing body with much-needed support. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the size of the school have meant that some improvements have not yet had their full impact. Parents' and carers' perceptions of the school are mixed. Some parents, particularly of pupils who are boarders, are highly appreciative of how the school provides for their children. Others are less convinced, particularly regarding the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour and dealing with their concerns.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have put in place strong procedures to ensure that vulnerable pupils are identified and supported. The appointment of new senior leaders has ensured that any concerns are followed up quickly on each of the school's four sites. In addition, a specialist early help worker has been employed to work on site with specific vulnerable pupils.

Leaders provide staff with high-quality training and guidance so they know exactly what to do if they have concerns about pupils or members of staff. The strengthened PSHE curriculum provides pupils with the knowledge to assess risk and keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A minority of pupils do not behave consistently well in lessons or in social times. This is particularly the case in key stage 4 and, as a result, some pupils feel unsafe. Leaders must raise expectations of pupils' behaviour further and ensure a more consistent response from staff to poor behaviour and bullying across the school.
- Too many pupils, in particular those who are disadvantaged, do not attend school regularly enough. This means that these pupils do not benefit from the good quality of education that the school provides. Leaders must continue determinedly with their work to raise these pupils' attendance.
- A significant minority of parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View survey lack confidence in the school. Some feel that the school leaders do not respond to concerns in a timely and effective manner. Leaders should ensure they develop strong channels of communication with parents to allow them to work together effectively.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	148221
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10276814
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2,287
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	360
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ray Morton
Headteacher	Adam Whitehead
Website	www.sgs.uk.net
Date of previous inspection	22 June 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the Bohunt Education Trust in December 2020.
- The school is a designated Church of England academy under the Chichester Diocese Board of Education. The section 48 inspection of the predecessor school was in June 2016.
- The headteacher took up his post in April 2022.
- A new local governing body was appointed in January 2021.
- The school currently uses two registered and two unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders, including the headteacher and senior leaders. They also met with subject leaders, leaders of the sixth form, pastoral leaders, teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, geography, mathematics, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed curriculum design with subject leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils from the lessons visited about their learning. In addition, the inspectors discussed curriculum design with leaders of some other subjects.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. They reviewed the school's single central record and met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss case studies of safeguarding referrals. Inspectors also spoke with pupils and staff.
- The lead inspector had an online meeting with representatives from the trust and the local governing body.
- Inspectors considered the views of members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey. The views of parents were taken into account from the 488 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and parents' free-text responses. Inspectors met with groups of pupils formally and informally to discuss their views on the school and considered the 723 responses to the Ofsted survey.

Inspection team

Mark Bagust, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Agle	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Woodbridge	His Majesty's Inspector

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