

Stanway Primary School

Villa Road, Stanway, Colchester, CO3 0RH

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in all years and attain above-average standards in English and mathematics.
- There are successful procedures for tracking pupils' progress and providing additional support where it is needed.
- Teaching is good in most classes with some examples of outstanding practice. Lessons are well planned and work is set at the right level so that pupils consistently make good progress.
- Most pupils behave well and feel very safe in the school.
- Attendance is well above average and reflects the pupils' enjoyment of school.
- There are a variety of additional activities which greatly enhance pupils' experience and enjoyment of school.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are providing clear and effective leadership which is maintaining the good quality of teaching and progress of the pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers provide enough opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always show pupils what to do next to improve their work
- Targets for pupils and teachers are not challenging enough in order to make faster pupil progress in the school
- Leaders are not taking enough opportunities to share outstanding teaching practice.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, of which four were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative, senior leaders, staff and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 32 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of evidence including the school evaluation form, the priority improvement plan, the system to track pupils' progress and records relating to behaviour and attendance. They also looked at records of lesson observations by senior staff, performance management information, safeguarding documentation, and a sample of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Stephen Walker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Diana Songer-Hudgell

Additional Inspector

Noureddin Khassal

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is a very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- A smaller-than-average proportion of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils from armed services families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- No pupils are presently attending any off-site alternative provision.
- Pupils are mainly taught in mixed-aged classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of the Tiptree and Stanway Consortium, which is a voluntary grouping of primary schools in the local area.
- The school has received the Activemark and Sportsmark awards and achieved Enhanced Healthy Schools status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding and never less than consistently good across the school by:
 - ensuring that pupils and teachers are working towards challenging targets which will demonstrate good or better progress
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently
 - ensuring that all teachers across the school mark pupils' work in the same way and make clear to them what they have to do to improve their work
 - using opportunities for further improving teaching through sharing outstanding practice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress during their time at school, as parents and carers agree. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is typically above average, which demonstrates good progress from their average starting points. Most pupils make the progress they should and an increasing number exceed expectations in English and mathematics. The progress of pupils from minority ethnic groups is as good as that of other pupils.
- Children make good progress in the Reception classes because of the well-planned provision and the good teaching by both the teachers and the teaching assistants. Structured activities and the good use of the inside and outside resources are having a significant impact on children's personal development, as well as encouraging number and language skills.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and 2, where there is a clear emphasis on the development of the key skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Nearly half the pupils are now gaining the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Reading is a key focus, and pupils read regularly in school and at home each day. The school is very effectively using a structured reading programme so that the majority of pupils make good progress and are highly proficient in reading.
- The school is improving the quality of writing by providing pupils with more structured plans for writing. The greater emphasis on speaking and listening in class and the clear guidance on what is expected in successful writing are supporting the improvement in writing skills for both boys and girls.
- The more practical approach in mathematics and the greater emphasis on investigation are leading to considerable improvements across the school. Better questioning by teachers is encouraging pupils to think about and solve the problems they are set. Expectations are higher in this subject and a higher percentage of pupils are now making faster progress than in previous years.
- The school is using additional funding very effectively to narrow the gap between the attainment and progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils, so that their achievement is now similar. Money is principally allocated for extra teaching assistants for individual support in reading, writing and mathematics, which is enabling them catch up with their learning.
- The school is ambitious to increase further the proportion of pupils making more than the expected progress from their starting points. However, at present, targets for pupils and staff are not sufficiently challenging and not enough pupils are aiming to make better than average progress.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, in line with their peers, due to effective work from teaching assistants who provide additional support in the class and in small withdrawal groups. Weaknesses in these pupils' learning are tackled and work is usually well matched to their needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching in most classes is usually good, with examples of some outstanding practice. As a result, most pupils make good progress and achieve well over their time at the school.
- The supportive atmosphere in lessons and good quality of planning ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their learning. Lessons normally involve a range of interesting activities so that pupils display interest and sustain high levels of concentration.
- Teachers are conscientious to make sure that the tasks are achievable but sufficiently challenging for each pupil. Many teachers encourage pupils to work independently and in groups, which often support a faster rate of progress and greater self-confidence.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are benefiting from the extra support they receive. The use of additional adults in class and the regular withdrawal of pupils for extra assistance are helping these pupils to overcome their learning difficulties and make good progress.
- All pupils have daily periods of literacy and numeracy, and this greatly supports the teaching of these basic skills. The teaching of phonics (the sounds represented by letters) is effective so that pupils quickly gain confidence in the construction of words and reading, particularly in the Reception Year and Key Stage 1.
- Outstanding teaching is seen when teachers check pupils' understanding, ensure that tasks provide sufficient challenge and encourage pupils to rely less on adults and more on themselves when learning. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils made excellent progress in developing their speaking skills as they worked with partners to plan demanding questions on their reading book. Similarly, Year 4 and 5 pupils were fully engaged and made rapid progress when the teacher challenged them to construct three-dimensional shapes in mathematics and then solve a series of related problems.
- Many teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to think more deeply about their learning. However, not enough teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils sometimes sit listening to the teacher for too long, and some teachers do the thinking for them.
- Marking is supportive but there are some inconsistencies in its quality across the classes and subjects. Marking tends to be more detailed in literacy than in the other subjects. Feedback from teachers does not always help pupils to recognise the next steps that they need to take to move their learning on.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils behave well in lessons, and this contributes to a calm and orderly environment for learning. There are clear expectations of behaviour and consistent systems to deal efficiently with any misbehaviour. The large majority of parents and carers are positive about behaviour in the school.
 - Pupils are polite and respectful to staff and each other and this contributes well to their learning and personal development. The regular assemblies greatly support the positive atmosphere in the school because they engage the pupils and foster their commitment.
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- Parents, carers and pupils confirm that bullying is very rare in the school. Pupils say that any unkind behaviour such as name-calling and teasing is dealt with quickly and effectively, in line with the anti-bullying policy. They are aware of the different forms of possible bullying such as cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to sex, gender, race and disability.
- Pupils feel valued as individuals. Pupils say they feel very safe in the school and display a good understanding of issues relating to safety, such as crossing the road, using the internet and not talking to strangers.
- Pupils generally respond well to teachers' good use of praise and encouragement to promote high standards of behaviour. However, a few pupils lose attention in a few lessons when the work does not fully engage them.
- The inspectors found that the very small number of pupils who display challenging behaviour are managed well and are not allowed to disrupt the learning of the other pupils. Pupils confirmed that disruptions are rare and that any misbehaviour is dealt with appropriately by the teachers and other adults.
- A good level of supervision during morning break provides a clear framework for pupils. Behaviour, though still good, is noisier during the lunch break than at any other time. Pupils are developing their skills in managing their own behaviour and older pupils are increasingly encouraged to act as playground leaders during break times. Pupils also contribute to the code of behaviour for the school and the rules for playtime.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is providing supportive and effective leadership which is ensuring the maintenance of good standards in the school. He is well supported by the deputy headteachers and senior leaders who are overseeing further developments in the school.
 - The school's self-evaluation reflects an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. The priority improvement plan is a comprehensive working document, with clear actions and targets that are focused on improving the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress.
 - Performance management and decisions made about teachers' salary progression are clearly based on the quality of teaching, as observed by senior staff, and the progress of their pupils. Teachers are held fully accountable for the progress of their pupils, although progress targets for the teachers are not challenging enough to encourage them to exceed the present school performance.
 - The local authority adopts a supportive approach to the school and ensures that a range of effective training for staff is available. The professional development of the staff is well supported by the literacy and numeracy leaders as well as the local consortium. However, the leaders are not fully using opportunities for further improving teaching through sharing the outstanding practice that already exists within the school.
 - The range of subjects taught is imaginative and relevant to pupils' needs. It provides a variety of activities, including the recent Egyptian Day and Health Promotion Week. A range of outside visits provides effective extension to the work in lessons, as do the large number of additional
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activities which are arranged through the Children’s University in Colchester. The broad range of experiences contributes well to pupils’ achievement and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is supportive of the school and is well informed about the areas for improvement. Its members are fully involved in monitoring progress and in holding leaders and staff to account, particularly through the priority improvement plan. They are aware of the quality of teaching and understand the data regarding the progress of pupils in the school. They are able to make sure that teachers’ salary increases are based on effective teaching and also tackle underperformance when required. Governors ensure that the robust procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. They are active in overseeing the use of the pupil premium funding and ensuring that it is effectively spent to support eligible pupils. Governors ensure they keep up to date with professional training and regularly visit school to raise their awareness, so that they can make informed decisions at meetings.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	114732
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	403245

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eric Blowes
Headteacher	Brian Combes
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2007
Telephone number	01206 574819
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