

# The Stanway School

Winstree Road, Stanway, Colchester, CO3 0QA

## Inspection dates

1–2 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Students achieve well in comparison to schools nationally in English and overall, and do particularly well in mathematics.
- Teaching is consistently strong and is continuing to improve rapidly.
- Behaviour is good. Students feel safe, behave responsibly and show positive attitudes to learning because of the high expectations the school has of them.
- Systems for monitoring and improving learning are highly effective.
- Leaders, managers and governors have worked effectively to improve the progress of students by ensuring that those who have fallen behind are given the help they need to get back on track.
- Good training opportunities have been provided which have improved teaching and ensured teachers perform at a consistently good standard.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students do not achieve as highly in science as they do in other subjects.
- Too few lessons in science are good or outstanding because teachers do not consistently check that students have understood what they are being taught in the lesson.
- Teachers do not always check that the guidance they provide in marking is acted upon by students.
- Leaders do not always identify areas for improvement clearly enough in improvement plans.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 52 lessons. Three lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- The inspectors examined pupils' workbooks, records and logs about pupils' safety, attendance and behaviour, and information about the performance of pupils in national tests.
- The minutes of governors' meetings, reports made by external advisors and the school's improvement plans were considered.
- The inspectors listened to the views of pupils and staff.
- The views of the 89 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, along with the views of those who spoke to the inspectors during the inspection, or from whom they received correspondence.
- The inspectors held discussions with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the academy trust, school leaders and support staff.

## Inspection team

James McAtear, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Angela Skinner	Additional Inspector
Paul Bartlett	Additional Inspector
Heather Housden	Additional Inspector
Jackie Easter	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Stanway School is larger than the average sized secondary school.
- Students are taught in five year groups and are placed in ability groups in most subjects.
- The vast majority of students are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average, the proportion receiving support at school action plus and those who have a statement of special educational needs, is broadly average.
- The headteacher operates as the executive headteacher of the Stanway Federation Trust in addition to serving as the headteacher of Stanway School.
- There are a small number of students who receive alternative provision at The Colchester Institute.
- The Stanway School became an academy school on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012. When the predecessor school, The Stanway School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum level expected for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement and teaching in science by:
  - ensuring that students have a secure grasp of the concepts being taught in each lesson, with teachers adapting the lesson plan as necessary so that students fully understand the key points.
- Improve teaching in other subjects so that more is consistently good or outstanding by ensuring all teachers regularly check that:
  - the key ideas they are teaching have been fully understood by all students
  - students make good use of the guidance they are given when their work is marked
- Strengthen leadership by:
  - ensuring that leaders identify areas for improvement more precisely in school improvement plans and address these rapidly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school at levels that are broadly in line with national averages. They make rapid progress during Key Stage 3. By the time they reach the end of their final year at the school the proportions of students making expected progress in mathematics is well above that found nationally.
- In English, rates of progress have not been as high but have been improving rapidly and are now broadly in line with national expectations. Students make consistently strong progress in most other subjects and achieve well over time. However, achievement is not as strong in science as it is overall,
- The school makes limited use of early entry in examinations for some students. Where it does so this does not inhibit the performance of students, including those who are more able.
- A small number of students attend additional provision at Colchester Institute. The school tracks their progress carefully and works well in partnership with the Institute; as a result these students make good progress.
- In 2012, the attainment in both English and mathematics of students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding was a little over a grade less than that made by other students at the school. Since 2012, this gap has narrowed so that the attainment of this group of students is now just under one quarter of a grade below their classmates in English and at a similar level to their classmates in mathematics. Students' current rates of progress are rapidly improving. This is because the school has used the funding it receives to allocate additional staff time to help the individuals and small groups of students who have fallen on behind to catch up. These students make good progress as a result of the additional tuition they receive.
- Students for whom the school receives Year 7 catch up funding, which is provided to assist those who did not achieve level 4 by the end of Year 6, make rapid progress with both reading and numeracy. This is because the school provides highly effective support on a one-to-one basis for these students.
- The vast majority of disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress at the school. Those supported at school action level make particularly good progress.
- The school makes a significant impact on the reading ability of its students, who read widely and often as a result of the support provided by the school. This is because the school identifies those who have fallen behind in reading and provides individual support to help them get back on track.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and students believe that students make good progress at the school, a view endorsed by inspection evidence.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because teachers plan lessons that are interesting and engaging and which, with a few exceptions, particularly in science, make sure students grasp the key learning points

securely.

- The quality of teaching is accurately checked by leaders and the school has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of its own teaching. As a result of this the training provided to teachers is effective in developing their skills.
- Teachers use questions very effectively to help students reflect at a deeper level on the things they are learning. For example, in one Year 7 history lesson students were asked about a local castle they had visited on a school trip, 'What are its limitations from a historian's point of view?' was the challenging question put to them by the teacher. The quality of discussion, in this lesson, as in almost all classes, was high because the questions students were asked to consider were challenging and encouraged them to be thoughtful in their responses.
- Teachers use resources skilfully to engage the attention of students. For example, in one religious education lesson, arresting images of homelessness abroad captured the imagination of students. Students said, 'It was really stimulating and made us think.'
- Other adults who assist the school's teachers make a highly effective contribution to the students' learning. This is because they are never passive during lessons as their work is carefully planned for by the teachers. As a result they work well in partnership with teaching staff.
- The vast majority of parents and students say they agree with the statement, 'Teaching is good at the school.'
- Marking in books is regular and positive and usually gives sufficient guidance to students on how to improve their work. Teachers do not always check that students have applied this advice, however.
- Teaching in science is too variable in quality. This is because teachers do not consistently check that students have securely grasped the key scientific ideas being taught before moving on with the lesson, or adapt it in the event that they haven't.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour in lessons is good. This is because there is a positive atmosphere in lessons where students are able to learn. Students enjoy their lessons and are engaged by the methods their teachers use to get points across to them.
- Behaviour is also good as students move around the school and during social times. This is because they are well supervised by school staff and also because the high expectations teachers and other adults have of them are clear to them.
- Almost all staff, parents and students whose views have been shared during the inspection agree that behaviour is good at the school.
- Students say they feel safe at the school and their parents agree. They say that teachers care for them and have confidence that incidences of bullying, though rare, are dealt with effectively by their teachers and other adults who support them. They are well taught about a range of dangers associated with fire, water and the Internet.

- Students mix well together. They help one another in lessons and are very willing to participate actively in the activities set up for them. They treat their teachers with respect and are well cared for by their teachers.
- Exclusions are uncommon at the school. Over time, the school has been notably successfully in improving the behaviour of those whose conduct needed to be better. It works well in partnership with other schools in the academy trust it is part of to achieve this.
- Levels of attendance are above the national average and improving. Students are usually punctual in arriving to school and to lessons.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The school's improvement plans focus clearly on those areas of school that require further development. For example, the school recognises the need to improve the results achieved in science and sometimes in English to the very high levels achieved in mathematics and other subjects throughout the school, and is implementing these plans effectively.
- School leaders and managers are effective in ensuring that school policies and procedures are consistently applied throughout the school so that students know what their teachers in all year groups and subjects expect of them, both in their behaviour and in the quality of their work.
- The school's arrangement for safeguarding at the time of the inspection met regulatory requirements.
- Teaching programmes provided by the school allow for a balanced choice between vocational and academic subjects. In doing this the school meets both the needs and the aspirations of its students. It is highly effective in developing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the students. For example, one religious education lesson saw students linking biblical texts to modern ideas of equality through the use of lively topical material to which they responded with great enthusiasm.
- The school has clear systems to get the best from teachers and other staff. These work well and ensure that the performance of staff is consistently improved over time. The training provided for staff is also effective in developing their ability to do their jobs well. In particular the school is highly effective in using its links with local partner schools in the Academy Trust to make sure teachers have good opportunities to learn from one another.
- Very high proportions of those parents, staff and students who shared their views with inspectors agree that the school is well led and managed.
- Leaders do not always ensure that they identify areas for improvement clearly enough in improvement plans and so do not always set time limits within which those areas will be improved.
- The Academy Trust is effective in ensuring that the school uses the resources allocated to it to improve standards of teaching and rates of progress so that, for example, the Trust has supported the school in reaching high levels of achievement in mathematics. It has also provided suitable alternatives to the use of fixed-term exclusions and has helped the school deal more effectively with instances of poor behaviour.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance at the school is good. Governors know the school well. They have a clear understanding of the use and the impact of pupil premium and are able to use data about the school's performance in examinations to make comparisons with other schools nationally. They understand the strengths in teaching in the school and are able to identify areas where teaching could be improved. They understand and provide strong support for school leaders and managers in implementing a robust system for managing the performance of teachers.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137927
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	413448

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1120
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brain Palmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jonathan Tippett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 575488
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