

# Inspection of a good school: The Stanway School

Winstree Road, Stanway, Colchester, Essex CO3 0QA

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Inspection dates:

6 and 7 June 2023

## Outcome

The Stanway School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Stanway are polite, considerate and respectful. Leaders model high expectations, and most pupils respond to this.

Most pupils behave appropriately in lessons and learn well as a result. The school is a calm and orderly place during social times.

Pupils trust the school's pastoral team to act on any concerns they have about bullying. Most pupils state that they have not been affected by bullying. Pupils rarely use prejudicial language. When this occurs, staff do not tolerate it. A typical pupil view is that they are '100% confident it would be dealt with.' School leaders work hard to inform pupils about harmful sexual behaviours. This has been effective in ensuring that pupils are confident to report concerns of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils comment that they feel safe.

Pupils respect those from different backgrounds. Pupils are actively encouraged at the school to treat everyone equally.

Pupils are offered a broad range of opportunities outside of the classroom. These include extra-curricular clubs such as science, technology, engineering and maths club. Pupils are encouraged to build character through their involvement in leadership roles, such as school councillors and mental health ambassadors.

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

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is well sequenced. It is ambitious for all pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They present and model information precisely. Assessment is generally used effectively and enables pupils to identify gaps in their understanding. As a result, pupils know more and remember more.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is appropriate. Adaptations in lessons are in line with pupils' agreed plans. Additional arrangements for transition and options choices are in place to help pupils manage change.

Reading is a priority for leaders. Early identification of the weakest readers ensures that additional support is in place to enable these pupils to develop their reading fluency.

There is a wide variety of activities and clubs available to pupils. The programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well planned and comprehensive. This curriculum programme includes a range of appropriate content. The student voice is taken seriously at Stanway. The views of pupils are considered carefully and directly influence the programme content for PSHE. The careers curriculum is well sequenced, and leadership of this area is strong. There are planned opportunities for pupils to experience apprenticeships, further education, and work experience placements.

Pupils typically enjoy attending the school and would recommend it. Most pupils behave well. Disruption during lessons is infrequent, and pupils can learn well. However, a small minority of pupils do not meet the school's expectations consistently. As a result, the number of suspensions is high. This impacts on the school's most vulnerable pupils.

Leaders are committed to improving opportunities for pupils. Governors and trustees have a clear understanding of the changing needs of the community. They recognise that a small minority of pupils are not meeting leaders' expectations. The overwhelming majority of staff are proud to work at The Stanway School. Staff state that leaders engage with them effectively over issues of workload. Staff well-being is considered by leaders at all levels. This is exemplified through 'wellbeing weeks', during which no meetings or after-school events are held.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that accurate records of pre-employment checks are maintained. Safer recruitment policies are followed effectively. There are regular internal and external reviews of safeguarding practice. All staff receive training to spot the signs that a child may need help. Staff are vigilant. Leaders act quickly when pupils require support. Where external agency support is needed, this is accessed quickly and effectively. All staff understand and use the system for reporting safeguarding concerns. Pupils know who to report worries to, and they are confident that action will be taken.

The combined efforts of leaders and staff ensure that the impact of harmful sexual behaviours is known and understood by the school community. While incidents of such behaviours are rare, they are treated seriously. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of pupils struggle to follow leaders' expectations for behaviour. As a result, rates of suspension are high. This particularly affects vulnerable pupils. Leaders have recognised that this as an issue, but the impact of their actions has not yet been realised. Leaders must implement a robust strategic plan to address the levels of suspension for this group of pupils.

## Background

When we have judged good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137927
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212485
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,399
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trustees</b>	Nick Pavitt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jonathan Bland
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stanway.essex.sch.uk">www.stanway.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 March 2017

## Information about this school

- The school joined The Sigma Trust in September 2016.
- The school currently has an acting head of school and acting executive headteacher as changes to the senior leadership team are implemented.
- The school makes use of both registered and unregistered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, 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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher, acting executive headteacher, senior leaders, staff, trust leaders and representatives from the local governing committee.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, English, history, modern foreign languages, and music. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspection team spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed safeguarding records. The lead inspector also reviewed the single central record of pre-employment checks made on staff and reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- The inspection team met with pupils from different year groups to talk about their learning and experiences at school. Inspectors also reviewed 94 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents provided by the school. These included the school development plan, curriculum documentation and school policies.
- Inspectors considered 225 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. This included 148 responses from parents and carers to the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the 64 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Susan Sutton

Ofsted Inspector

James Shapland

Ofsted Inspector

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