

Stanway Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114732
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311682
Inspection date	10 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Brian Oppenheim

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 on roll	
School	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Eric Blowes
Headteacher	Mr Brian Combes
Date of previous school inspection	24 - 26 November 2003
School address	Villa Road Stanway Colchester Essex CO3 0RH
Telephone number	01206 574819
Fax number	01206 769171

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well pupils make progress; the impact of the range of initiatives, including literacy and numeracy, on the quality of teaching and learning; and the quality of self-review and planning. The inspector gathered evidence from discussions with the chair of governors, senior and middle managers, children from every year group, parents' views and observations in lessons. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a broadly average size primary school that serves the Stanway area of west Colchester. Most pupils live locally but a significant proportion comes from wider afield. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage who have English as their first language. A small number of pupils are from a range of cultural heritages and several of them have English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is a little lower than average. Children's attainment on entry to school is typical of children nationally.

The school has gained national recognition for many aspects of its work including Advanced Healthy Schools status, Activemark Award, Achievement Award and Sports Mark. It is also involved in a range of national and local initiatives including Making Good Progress, the Essex Writing Project, Reading Connects and intervention programmes for reading and social skills.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Stanway Primary School provides a good education for its pupils and some aspects of its work are outstanding. As a result, pupils achieve above average standards by Year 6. Their personal development and well-being are also good. Most parents are pleased with the education the school provides and their children's experience: 'An excellent school', 'We can't praise the school highly enough' and 'A very healthy school – promotes healthy living'. A few parents expressed concern about bullying; others were impressed with the school's approach. Evidence shows that where bullying happens it is dealt with well. The headteacher leads the school sensitively with a very clear sense of purpose and a strong commitment to continuous improvement. As a result, there is a firm emphasis on making sure that all pupils do well and enjoy school. The school is involved in a number of well-focused initiatives to raise standards. Leaders identify areas for development and plan improvements. What makes this process effective is that all staff contribute to taking the school forward. As a result, the school's capacity to improve is good. Teaching is good and, together with a clear sense of purpose, this ensures that pupils make good progress with their learning.

Pupils' achievement is good. It has been good over the past five years and the school has done well to maintain this position since the last inspection. Pupils' achievements are improving and standards rising. Progress in the Foundation Stage is good for most children. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 but the pace of their progress picks up again from Year 3. Pupils progress well so that in Year 6 they reach standards above those in most schools in the national tests. Pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The school's push to improve the quality of learning in English has had a positive impact. For example, pupils' reading and writing skills have improved and this is now feeding through into their standards of work. As a result, those pupils who were not making as much progress as they should are now starting to progress well. The proportion of pupils making at least two National Curriculum levels progress in English has increased between Years 3 and 6. The school is now turning its attention to improving learning further in mathematics, where achievement is not quite as good as in English.

The school's focus on pupils' outcomes, and the impact this is having on achievement, is the result of the good leadership and management. Involvement with the Making Good Progress and the Essex Writing projects illustrates the way the school uses its outstanding self-evaluation to identify its needs honestly and accurately. It also shows the school's commitment to raising standards and to taking the action necessary to make this happen. The school collects and analyses performance data very effectively so that it is able to identify where there is underachievement. This information is used well with teachers to identify those pupils not making sufficient progress. This process is one of the reasons why achievement is rising and the proportion of pupils reaching the school's appropriately challenging targets is improving in English.

Initiatives, such as to improve the provision for literacy, are planned and implemented thoughtfully and illustrate the school's attention to detail. The headteacher and senior leaders have established clarity in the way in which staff work together to monitor and review the school's work, and set the priorities for improvement. The curriculum teams, for example, enable all staff to contribute to self-review, setting the school's priorities and taking action to improve. Similarly, the governing body's Improvement Planning and Evaluation Committee enables governors to check the school's work in partnership with teachers. Governors offer good support and discharge their responsibilities well. As a result, improvement is effective and sustainable.

The school uses its resources well. Accommodation is sufficient but the quality of the outside classrooms is unsatisfactory. Teachers are very good at ensuring that this does not have an adverse impact on pupils' achievement.

Pupils say they enjoy school and are very positive about the good range of additional activities, particularly sports. They also spoke enthusiastically of the school's strong emphasis on healthy eating. The school has gained Advanced Healthy School status, and an Activemark award, and provides healthy food at lunchtime. Pupils have an extremely good knowledge of health matters. The school has successfully involved pupils in developing the school's provision through the school council and pupil surveys. Recent developments to the good curriculum have been systematic and are having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment. Such opportunities to take on responsibilities all contribute to enriching pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is good and pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. This is the result of good teaching, the emphasis on developing pupils' self-confidence and the good quality care, support and guidance.

Nearly all teaching is at least good and some aspects are outstanding. In a Year 5/6 class, for example, excellent opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and improve their writing added very significantly to their learning and self-confidence. Use of this excellent assessment opportunity is not consistent across all years and subjects. Detailed lesson plans are a strength. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and are integral to the school's work. Support for pupils who are finding school difficult is good, such as during 'Bubble Time', where pupils have an opportunity to work with a small group to promote cooperation and develop their self-confidence. The quiet room and the positive approach to bullying all play an important part in promoting pupils' personal development and well-being.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in their learning. The emphasis on self-confidence ensures that personal development is also good. However, teaching also has a strong impact on achievement. It is well planned and targeted and as a result meets children's needs well. There are good links with parents. The curriculum teams are effective in identifying areas for improvement and leadership and management are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching through a more consistent use of the best assessment practice.
- Implement the priority to improve learning in mathematics.
- Improve the accommodation provided by the outside classrooms.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

10 December 2007



Dear Children

Inspection of Stanway Primary School, Stanway, CO3 0RH

Thank you very much for welcoming me into your classrooms and talking to me when I visited your school just before Christmas. I have now finished writing the report and would like to share what I found out about your school. You are rightly proud of your school. It is a good school and some of the things it does for you are outstanding. Your school is good because:

- you make good progress with your work and achieve well in lessons. Each year achievement is improving a little bit more and standards are rising
- your behaviour is good: you are polite and courteous and take your responsibilities seriously. You are involved in helping the school develop through the school council and you contribute a lot to improving the school
- you enjoy school and are very positive about the good range of additional activities, particularly sports. You are enthusiastic about the school's emphasis on healthy eating
- teaching is good and in some lessons you have excellent opportunities to learn by assessing your own work. Teaching assistants are good at helping you learn
- adults in the school provide good support so that you can always find someone to help you with a problem. Bubble Time is an example of how the school can help
- the school is run very well and your teachers are doing many things to make it even better.

I have asked the school to make the following improvements.

- Improve teaching even more so that assessment is used better.
- Improve your learning in mathematics.
- Work to improve the outside classrooms.

Thank you again for making my visit so enjoyable.

Brian Oppenheim
Lead inspector