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Mr P Searson  
Headteacher  
Stretton Handley Church of England Primary School  
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DE55 6FH

Dear Mr Searson

### **Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: English**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 29 November 2010 to look at work in English.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation and pupils' work; observation of five lessons; and a visit to the Reception.

The overall effectiveness of English is satisfactory.

### **Achievement in English**

Achievement in English is satisfactory.

- Attainment is below average at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has a history of underachievement at the higher levels. In 2010, two pupils gained Level 5 in English for the first time in recent years.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in Reception towards the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy. Progress is not as strong in writing and in linking letters and sounds. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average, though there has been a small decline in writing. Pupils in the Reception, Years 1 and 2 mixed-age classes were observed to be making good progress in learning to write instructions.
- For the last three years, Year 6 pupils have made inadequate progress in English from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. The school's monitoring systems indicate that rates of progress in reading and writing in all year groups have improved, particularly in the last year. Most pupils, except those with

special educational needs and/or disabilities, are now on track to meet their age-related expectations in all year groups.

- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and writing and many are confident speakers. Older pupils in particular enjoy extended writing and can write at length and with accuracy.

### **Quality of teaching in English**

The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory.

- Teaching in Reception, Years 1 and 2 is planned well with activities that match the needs of the different ages and abilities. Sequences of activities are effective in developing reading and writing skills and build methodically on children's learning. Pupils are actively involved and enjoy the learning, including the phonics sessions. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support the development of pupils' language skills.
- At Key Stage 2, the better teaching is planned well and prepared to promote reading and writing. Work is matched well for the different year groups and well supported with a variety of learning resources. The 'Big Write' sessions provide good opportunities for independent and extended writing. Pupils learn to develop their vocabulary well and consolidate their learning by assessing their own and others' work. The observed guided reading session was well-organised, purposeful and enjoyable, and well supported by teaching assistants. Marking is systematic and frequent and provides specific praise and areas for improvement. Pupils know their levels and targets and know what to do to improve.
- Some teaching makes insufficient reference to the assessment criteria to guide the learning of the different ages and abilities in the class. On occasion, the purpose of the task is not defined clearly enough which leads to a mismatch with the activity. As a result, the pupils are not clear how to succeed. The final part of the lesson is sometimes too rushed and the teacher does not draw out the learning. Comments from pupils and evidence from the observed lesson indicate that spelling sessions at Key Stage 2 lack interest and choice and do not stretch the higher ability pupils.

### **Quality of the curriculum in English**

The quality of the curriculum in English is satisfactory.

- Pupils have regular opportunities to use drama in learning and read poetry. They have regular access to information and communication technology which extends their use of media to make spoken and visual presentations. Educational visits are used appropriately to stimulate learning.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in English**

Leadership and management in English are satisfactory.

- You have a clear understanding that prior underachievement needs to be tackled. The use of assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress is thorough. This has contributed to improved learning and progress in English across the school. Half-termly progress meetings identify underachievement and individuals are targeted for additional help. Governors are actively and helpfully involved in monitoring pupils' progress and the impact of the well-focused literacy improvement plan. Targets are appropriately ambitious.
- Teaching and learning have improved as a result of training and development. The use of learning objectives has become established and there is more imaginative and varied use of resources. The quality of teaching remains satisfactory but inconsistent.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring that pupils make at least their expected progress in English from Key Stage 1 to the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- improving the quality of teaching of English at Key Stage 2 by:
  - making more explicit use of assessment criteria in lessons
  - planning work more precisely so that the objectives and activities consistently match the different needs of pupils, especially the more able.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Bernard Campbell**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**