



Lowick and Holy Island CE First Schools

Headteacher Report to Governors

Autumn Term 2023

School Characteristics

- School population**

Cohort	Nursery	Reception	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Overall
Gender (girls / boys)	11 / 7	4 / 2	0 / 1	1 / 3	5 / 2	1 / 3	24 / 16
Lowick / Holy Island	15 / 3*	4 / 2	1 / 0	3 / 1	6 / 1	3 / 1	32 / 8
Total	18	6	1	4	7	4	40

**Please note that Holy Island children attending nursery are officially counted as Lowick children until they start school and they move to the Holy Island SIMs system. This is because our nursery operates under Lowick school community powers. I include them under Holy Island numbers above so we can see the trend over time for Holy Island school.*

Since the previous report:

Nursery has increased to 18 children despite 6 children moving into Reception this year – this is the largest it has ever been. Stay and Play continues to be well attended. This is a positive indicator for the future growth of the school as a whole. Holy Island has 2 children in the Reception year group with another 2 expected into Reception next year. Our year 4 has increased by 1 child who joined us in July.

- Pupil characteristics (Special Educational Needs / Disability (SEND) / Pupil Premium (PP))**

Five children in Lowick are identified as having additional needs (SEND) at the level of 'school support' (four in our main school and one in nursery). In addition, two children are identified as SEND with an Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP). We are in the process of working towards an EHCP for two of the children currently at 'school support'. No Holy Island children are identified as SEND.

We have one child in school who is Looked After (LAC) or who have previously been LAC and so attracts a Pupil Premium. We have one child in receipt of free school meals (FSM). This child's family continues to receive support over the holidays through the online groceries voucher scheme funded by county. No Holy Island children are identified as attracting the Pupil Premium.

- Current staffing**

- Headteacher: Rebecca Simpson
- Class 1 teacher: Carolyn Strangeways

- Class teacher (based on Holy Island and sharing Class 2 in Lowick): Heather Stiansen
- Nursery teacher: Kayleigh Adams
- Teaching assistants: Steph Hay, Becca Armstrong (in nursery), Sara Morgan (for SEND support) and Karen Ward on Holy Island (also our caretaker there).
- Support staff: Becki Telfer is our Administrator. Lesley Bradbury and Karen Ward are our caretakers for Lowick and Holy Island respectively. Joanne Marshall is our new Early Years practitioner apprentice working in nursery. Heather Hay is our new lunchtime supervisor.
- Our school cook is Olive Fortune.
- Susie Cochrane delivers music for class 2 and French for years 3 and 4.

Adults in school other than staff (with DBS, but these adults are always supported by a member of staff).

- Mr Graham is a sports coach who delivers our Commando Joe's sessions on Thursday afternoons.
- We work with a range of sports coaches throughout the year through the Newcastle United Foundation.

Wider staffing information: As you know, I agreed to be an interim headteacher in the autumn term to look after Hugh Joicey CE First School in Ford whilst they recruit a headteacher. I am therefore working 2 days a week at Ford. Unfortunately, they did not successfully recruit a headteacher in September as they had hoped. This means that we will need to consider plans going forward as being interim headteacher for Ford as well as my usual role at Lowick and Holy Island is not sustainable long-term as it stands.

- **Safeguarding overview**

Since my previous Headteacher Report for the summer term:

Concern raised for school file.	Children's services referrals	Early Help referrals	Child protection plan	Child in need	Referral to LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)	Operation Encompass	Operation Endeavour
1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

We have one child open to children's services due to events before they joined the school. Regular team around the family (TAF) meetings are scheduled with the multiple agencies and carers for this child.

We had whole staff training on the second September teacher training day through the NCC safeguarding team. As part of this, the staff had training on the new Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 which came into effect in September. In addition, some staff have also updated their Prevent training this term (depending on when they last had training in Prevent or whether they have had this training before if they were new to the school). This reflects the emphasis in the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance on preventing radicalisation.

Mrs Strangeways and I have both done the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) refresher training in October this year so that we are currently up to date on the higher level of safeguarding training. I can also report that NCC's safeguarding priorities for this year are: harm outside of the family/home (extra familial harm or contextual safeguarding), online safety, domestic abuse and neglect.

After 'attending' an Ofsted webinar this term, in particular on how safeguarding is inspected, I worked with Mrs Telfer to ensure that all governors had had a s128 check on our Single Central Record (SCR). This has been done and the SCR updated.

It is also important that governors are aware of how filtering and monitoring of computer usage and online activity happens in school. We use Senso software which looks for key words / images and flags up 'violations'. I then receive email notifications to check these on the violations log on the Senso website. I can then see a screen grab of the trigger and can then mark as a false positive or see whether it needs a further follow up.

Mrs Montgomery (as Chair of Governors) came in to undertake a governor's safeguarding visit and we used the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2023 and our up to date Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy to consider the governor's responsibilities and the school's responsibilities to ensure safeguarding in school is effective. Our safeguarding audit (s175) and linked action plan has now been completed for this year and our safeguarding support worker from NCC is due to visit shortly to offer supervision and further advice as needed as part of our service level agreement (SLA) entitlement.

- **Premises**

A neighbour to the Lowick site contacted the school over the summer holiday to request swift action as they had taken down their hedge to reveal our chain link fence was damaged (it has been in between our hedge and their hedge for many years so had not been accessible). Our neighbour was keen to put up his own wooden fence. On consultation with our grounds management company we decided to remove the fence and cut back our hedge so that there would be a way to maintain our hedge without damaging their fence through growth in the future.

The same neighbour got in touch before half term holiday to complain that a branch had fallen out of the oak tree (which overhangs their access driveway) in the recent storm and high winds and that he felt the shape of the tree was uneven. We requested a visit from the NCC Tree Officer who came out promptly. The tree officer rang me before the half term holiday to share his view that the oak tree was safe and stable and the branch which had fallen out was a minor one. He will be sending a written report in due course. I contacted the neighbour to reassure him before the half term holiday. I also acknowledged that if he wished to trim the branches overhanging his property line then he has the right to do so, but asked him to please to let us know if he plans to do this so we can ensure safe access to our site.

We have concerns about the roof at the Lowick school site. There is a patch of discolouration in a ceiling tile in classroom 1 and the initial assessment of the roof in that area is that it is 'soft'. We have asked property services to put us in touch with someone who would be able to mend the roof as it is felt flat roof.

Leadership and Management

As you will have seen in our school development plan (SDP) this year, leadership continues to be developed across the school. Miss Adams is continuing her National Professional Qualification in Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL) and is driving improvements in our nursery and for our Reception children across both schools. Mrs Stiansen is developing her leadership further in English (including reading) and Science and is undertaking projects to explore assessment across the curriculum as well as focusing on early reading and developing a love of writing across the school. Mrs Strangeways will be working with the Great North Maths Hub to develop greater expertise in a teaching research group in mixed aged teaching in maths considering how the mastery approach needs to be adapted for our particular context.

We continue to ensure our curriculum is ambitious and that the children are developed both personally and academically. With changes coming in our partnership area we are conscious of the fact that we will be converting to primary (two tier) from September 2025 when we will retain our year 4s into year 5 for the first time. This has implications for our curriculum planning and we are already considering how we can make the most of the opportunities this affords us as well as ensuring that we meet the challenges proactively.

Staff training remains important for us to be able to deliver the strong curriculum, develop skilled and knowledgeable leadership and to ensure we meet the many needs of the children in our care.

Staff training since the previous Headteacher Report:

Date	Training focus	Who	Outcome	Impact
Ongoing this year 2023 2024	Apprenticeship – level 3 early years practitioner	JM	New member of staff trained to level 3 to work with our early years children.	Early years offer is enhanced with up to date knowledge and developing expertise.
Ongoing this year 2023 2024	Teacher Research Group on mixed age maths teaching (through the Great North Maths Hub)	CS	Shared practice and research based pedagogy ensures that our mixed aged teaching is effective for our context.	Children develop secure maths skills and knowledge with clear progression.
Ongoing until April 2024	NPQEYL (National Professional Qualification in Early Years leadership)	KA	Increased understanding of leadership in Early Years and developing leadership skills.	School development plan for Early Years linked to NPQ targets. Planning and staff development for EY practice is strong.
29 th June	Thrive: supporting LGBTQA+ in primary schools.	RS	Ensuring our Thrive approach and culture in school is inclusive.	That the school can consider inclusivity and ensure that it is a welcoming and supportive place for everyone.
4 th July	Diocese educational conference.	RS	RS is up to date on latest in educational philosophy, especially with regard to church schools. Opportunity to liaise with other educational professionals. Workshops on wellbeing including on imposter syndrome.	Vision and leadership refreshed and inspired.
July	Senior Mental Health lead training	RS	School has an up to date mental health plan linked to key areas of school improvement.	Greater awareness of mental health needs and actions that can be taken to support.
September teacher training days: 4 th Sept	English and phonics refresher	HS, SH, SM, CS, KA	All staff working on RWI are clear on expectations on phonics and encouraging reading in school.	English teaching is effective. Phonics work is effective.

Date	Training focus	Who	Outcome	Impact
September teacher training days: 5 th Sept	Trauma Informed Practice	Teachers & TAs	Staff working with new pupil have greater awareness of impact of trauma on behaviour and wellbeing.	Pupil is well supported in school. Potential issues are anticipated and managed well.
	Safeguarding update by NCC – including KCSiE 2023.	All staff	Staff are aware of their responsibilities and have the understanding and knowledge to ensure that everyone is kept safe.	Staff ensure a vigilant safeguarding culture.
September	Prevent update – online training through gov.uk.	KW, BA, HH	Updated awareness of our duty around Prevent / radicalisation.	Staff are up to date with Prevent awareness to ensure a vigilant safeguarding culture.
12 th September	SEND network meeting – self evaluation	RS	Introduction to self-evaluation software being made available to schools in Northumberland.	We will be able to evaluate our school and create an action plan for SEND.
15 th September	NCC Inclusion Summit	RS	To consider how schools can be more inclusive / best practice.	Legal situation around exclusion clarified, importance of reasonable adjustments and flexibility in school emphasised.
20 th Sept	Ofsted webinar – updates to framework for 2023	RS	Up to date knowledge of changes to Ofsted approach / EIF	Updated SCR check and school aware of latest EIF expectations.
27 th Sept	Emotional literacy update	SM	ELSA offer is up to date and refreshed.	ELSA work in school is effective.
2 nd October	Faith based abuse safeguarding update	HH	Wider understanding of different kinds of safeguarding.	Children are kept safe – staff are vigilant.
5 th October	DSL refresher	RS & CS	DSL and deputy DSL up to date with higher level of safeguarding training.	Children are kept safe – staff are vigilant.
6 th October	Senior Leader Briefing – NCC followed by Berwick HT Partnership meeting	RS	Updated on issues affecting schools including HR, SEND, results, disadvantaged pupils and on the current progress on our conversion to 2 tier.	RS up to date on latest information from NCC team and support for work around pp children.
20 th October	Transitioning from first to primary – NCC supported work	RS	Initial meeting to consider areas which will need attention to ensure clear plan for transition.	Transition plan begun based on advice of those with prior experience of the transition.
6 th November	Computing subject leadership	KA	Up to date advice on leading computing.	Computing teaching and learning is effective.

Planned staff training coming up:

Date	Training focus	Who	Outcome	Planned Impact
7 th November	Safeguarding visit from our liaison at NCC	RS	Safeguarding is discussed to support future training needs, actions from action plan and supervision to support DSLs.	DSLs supported and safeguarding remains high profile in terms of ensuring knowledge and expertise.

Date	Training focus	Who	Outcome	Planned Impact
8 th November	Designated Teacher conference (online)	RS	Designated teacher for LAC is supported to evaluate and improve offer in school.	Education and support for LAC is effective.
14 th Nov	Pupil Premium network meeting	RS	Strategy and impact document are strong and moderated against other schools with NCC support.	Pupil premium strategy is effective.
15 th Nov (first session)	Outdoor learning for Early Years	BA	Nursery and early years offer evaluated and improvements planned to support outdoor learning.	Outdoor learning becomes a strength of our early years offer.
22 nd Nov	RE network	RS	RE teaching and learning is supported.	RE teaching and learning is effective.
14 th December	DSL Locality briefing	CS	DSLs aware of local offer and links to support and up to date training.	DSLs are effective. Safeguarding maintains high priority in school.

Quality of Education

Our learning theme this term is London, with a focus on the Great Fire of London after the plague. Layered learning has been planned around English texts, history, geography, forest school art and design technology (looking at London architecture – bridges, landmarks and buildings) and will be continued with work in art this half term on cityscapes – drawing inspiration from Tréhin and L.S. Lowry. In RE the learning theme last half term was about Hinduism and this half term is about Incarnation with a focus on Christianity.

Our enrichment days this term include a trip to the Discovery Museum which is offering a workshop comparing the Great Fire of London to the Great Fire of Gateshead and Newcastle as well as a STEM Day where we have invited Professor Brainstorm (a physics professor) to deliver two workshops on the Magic of Science (about materials and electricity) and on a Mission to Mars (exploring rockets, space exploration and what Mars is like). This second workshop will link forwards towards our learning theme next term on Ice Explorers as well as adding an additional dimension to our science offer.

External data

Our end of **Early Years** (Reception) results were good with 100% achieving a good level of development (bearing in mind – only one child!)

As anticipated our **phonics checker** results were strong with 100% pass for both Lowick and Holy Island. Year 2 child taking the re-check also passed well.

Year 2 results – these were moderated by NCC this year:

Holy Island:

- 100% (1 child) at least at expected standard for reading, writing and maths. Greater depth in reading and writing confirmed through NCC moderation.

Lowick:

- 83% (5/6) at least at expected standard in reading, with two children (33%) working at greater depth.

- 83% (5/6) at least at expected standard in writing
- 67% (4/6) at least at expected standard in maths, one child (17%) also working at greater depth in maths.

Comparison to National KS1 results

Our results compare well against predicted national averages – being a pupil above in reading and writing and in line for maths. Holy Island is only one pupil so comparisons are not as useful to make, but greater depth in reading and writing is an excellent result.

- Reading predicted national average 68%
- Writing predicted national average 60%
- Maths predicted national average 70%

(Predicted national averages are from NCC slides at Senior Leader briefing)

Behaviour and attitudes

The school continues to have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and visitors continue to comment on how well our children behave in school and when we visit other places. We have very few minor incidents –we have had no major incidents, no exclusions or prejudicial / racist incidents or bullying incidents since the previous report.

We are now beginning our round of pupil voice based on subjects to enable the children to reflect on themselves as learners and their responsibility for helping themselves as well as identifying what we do that they feel helps them to learn. We will begin with pupil voice on English and maths before carrying out pupil voice in different subjects through this and next term.

• Attendance (Autumn 1 half term)

Our attendance percentages so far this year have been positive with some minor illnesses having a small impact. We continue to monitor closely.

Lowick

Overall attendance 98.6%

Pupil premium group: 97.4%

SEND group: 100% (EHCP) and 100% (SEN support)

Persistent absentees: 0

Holy Island

Overall attendance is 99.1%.

No pupil premium

No SEND groups.

Persistence absentees: 0

This is an improvement on our end of year attendance for 2022 – 2023 which was as follows:

Lowick

Overall attendance 95.1%

Pupil premium group: 98.1%%

SEND group: 98.1% (EHCP) and 93.8% (SEN support)

Holy Island

Overall attendance 92.1% (although lower than we would like this reflects as improving pattern over the year with attendance being affected by a joint holiday in the autumn term in 2022 of two Holy Island families).

Note that this year the family has chosen to take their holiday over the half term holiday so this has been an improvement for 2023.

No pupil premium / No SEND groups.

There have been no suspensions or exclusions since the last report.

Personal Development

Personal development is very important and we were really pleased to have this recognised in our SIAMs reports from the summer term. We are continuing to ensure that we build in rich cultural opportunities into our school year, linked to the curriculum where appropriate. We began the school year with work on 'In Our Hands' in English across the school to ensure that we begin the year with a discussion of our values and our impact on the school and the wider world. This book allowed the children to think about how they can 'bring colour to the world' with important themes such as encouraging others, being resilient and working together.

Commando Joe's has continued this year with a focus on Samuel Pepys alongside the character education around RESPECT (resilience, excellence, self-esteem, passion, excellence, communication and teamwork). This links to our learning theme of London well and enables a different perspective on our curriculum.

Clubs we offer after school:

Our clubs have a high take up from children in each year, this includes groups of children such as SEND or pupil premium. This term our offer includes:

Monday: art club

Tuesday: film club

Wednesday: sports club

Thursday: Commando Joe's club

Friday: eco-schools / environmental / forest school club

Enrichment opportunities since the last report

Date	Activity	Who	Outcomes
12 th June	Maya Day – past productions drama based workshop in school introducing the Maya in a memorable way.	Main school	The children make connections to their prior learning. The children learn more about how Maya lived and what they did in a way that they will remember.
13 th June	Hosting Year 4 transition visit at Lowick	Year 4s	Opportunity to take part in archery, Commando Joes and outdoor art activities whilst cementing relationships with peers to support transition.
14 th June	Trip to Dance City in Newcastle for ‘Jumpers for Goalposts’ project.	Main school	Opportunity to take part in a dance / football workshop and work with professional dancers in an engaging way. Also an opportunity to travel into a city in contrast to our usual location.
23 rd June	Trip to walk the sands, following the Pilgrim’s poles to Holy Island.	Main school, governors and clergy.	The children make links to our school vision ‘Journeying Together’ and consider pilgrimage and their sense of place.
30 th June	Etal cricket festival for local schools.	Main school	Opportunity to take part in sports with a wider community.
6 th July	Sports day / beach cricket / summer fair	Whole school	Opportunity to take part in sporting event, raise money for school – taking leadership and responsibility.
11 th July	STEM Day – light and shadow	Main school	Opportunity to enrich the science, maths and DT curriculum in a memorable way.
14 th July	Trip to Lilidorei in Alnwick	Whole school	A chance to explore storytelling and video making in a fun environment.
18 th July	Berwick partnership schools skipping festival	Class 2	A chance to take part in a wider sporting event with other schools.
20 th July	Trip to Northumberland Zoo	Whole school	A chance to recap learning about animals as well as a reward trip requested through the school council for the end of year.
22 nd September	Trip to visit Pippa’s Garden at The Friendly Hound.	Main school	A chance to extend our forest school work and make links to the uses of plants (science) for medical purposes (also linked to our history work on the plague).
6 th October	Nature walk in Lowick	Nursery	Children had a chance to see the seasonal changes and collect natural materials for a Harvest Festival collage for the churches.
16 th October	Harvest Festival at St Mary’s church, Holy Island	Whole school	Opportunity to take part in collective worship with the community and consider how thankful we are for the harvest as well as a chance to donate towards local foodbanks.
23 rd October	Kirtida from the Hindu Temple in Newcastle visit to school	Main school	The children worked with Kirtida to learn more about Hindu beliefs, stories, music and culture to extend their learning in RE.

Planned upcoming enrichment events

Date	Activity	Who	Outcomes
7 th November	Trip to Busy Bees nursery in Seahouses	Nursery	Opportunity to visit another setting, meet new people, try out a new environment.
9 th November	Trip to Discovery Museum in Newcastle.	Main school	Opportunity to take part in workshop comparing Great Fire of London to Great Fire of Gateshead and Newcastle. Links to history and geography curriculum.
10 th November	Remembrance at the war memorial	Whole school	Opportunity to join with local community for collective worship for an act of Remembrance.
20 th November	STEM Day – Professor Brainstorm	Main school	Opportunity to join in two workshops on the Magic of Science (linked to materials and electricity) and on a Mission to Mars (linked to space and materials) in an entertaining and memorable way.
14 th December	Trip to the Maltings to see the pantomime.	Whole school	Opportunity to see a live performance.

Our planned trip to the Berwick Literary Festival has been postponed but we are hopeful that this will be rearranged for our KS1 children.

• Collective Worship

Since the last report, we have had our Harvest Festival service at St Mary's church on Holy Island on 16th October. This was a lovely service and well attended by families and the community. We are grateful to Rev Sarah, Rev Sam and Rev Alex for leading the worship. The children sang songs and had written their own prayers which many of them chose to read out in church.

We are planning on a community collective worship at Lowick War memorial on Friday 10th November at 10.45am (the community are invited into school first for refreshments from 10am). We also are planning on having our Christmas service at St John the Baptist in Lowick on 18th December at 10.30am.

In the meantime, we continue to welcome the clergy into school on Wednesdays for our collective worship and the staff lead worship on other days so that there is a daily act of worship.